

1948

## **A long range recreational plan for the town of Conway, Massachusetts.**

Warren Irving Johansson  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

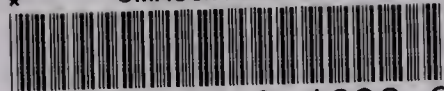
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A LONG RANGE RECREATIONAL PLAN FOR THE  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

JOHANSSON - 1948

7-10-48  
A LONG RANGE RECREATIONAL PLAN FOR THE  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS.

by  
Warren Irving Johansson

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Master of Science

University of Massachusetts  
Amherst  
1948

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Warren I. Johansson.



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CHAPTER I.  
INTRODUCTION.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

Good recreation is essential to happy living. Through recreation one's personality and power is developed. As the speed of modern civilization increases, man finds it necessary to give release to pent up emotions. To do this he may turn to gardening, rural living, athletics, nature, craft, stamp collecting, hiking, or a thousand and one other things. He may earn money in the city and commute to the suburbs to really live. These are examples of what may be considered as potential recreation. Recreation cannot be defined as a tangible thing. However, we know that recreation is essential for happiness and satisfaction in living. Self-expression may be attained through recreation. The mechanistic life of today often excludes the opportunity for self-expression. Society and the individual face a grave danger when this happens. It is generally recognized that neighborhood recreation and cooperation are necessary to achieve the abundant life. The existing recreational needs in rural communities are being appraised and met by planned programs. To be most successful, trained leaders are being employed to help local people to build a sound program.



## CHAPTER II.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE.

## CHAPTER II.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE.

A Long Range Recreational Plan for the Town of Conway, Massachusetts.

#### Purpose and Scope.

The purpose of this study is to propose a system of recreational facilities to be developed in Conway over a period of 15 to 20 years by its citizens. In doing this it has been necessary to consider regional standards. It is recognized that the average citizen, regardless of age, desires satisfactory recreation, first, during short periods of leisure time, and second, on special occasions as week-ends and holidays, when longer periods of leisure time are available. Because of the decline of agriculture and the loss of large scale manufacturing in Conway, its citizens have great need for new sources of income. Therefore, the economic aspects of recreation as a new industry for the community have been dealt with in full.

#### Procedure.

A survey of how Conway came to be as we find it today involves many factors. Consequently this study is based on the natural history, the social history, the

economic activities, and the social and recreational facilities of the town. This survey was accomplished by means of interviews, questionnaires, observations, and reading. As the author has lived in Conway, and as he served as the Director of the Conway Youth Center for 15 months, there were many opportunities for first hand information and observation. Data is portrayed by means of tables and graphs. Other visual material includes photographs and maps. A summary of the findings is presented and the conclusions are prepared as recommendations to the Town of Conway for the long range development of recreational facilities that will bring greater happiness and more economic stability to the whole community.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CONWAY.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CONWAY.

##### Location.

To many people Conway is thought of being located in the Berkshire Hills. Technically it is a part of the maturely dissected Green Mountain Plateau. For the purpose of this paper it is important to realize that it is a hill town as contrasted to the Connecticut Valley towns. Politically it is located in Franklin County (See Fig. 1).

The Deerfield River, a natural barrier to the north, marks the boundary between Conway and Shelburne. The Mechanicsville Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad runs along the northern boundary of Conway. Deerfield lies to the east in the Connecticut Valley and Whately to the southeast. The other bordering communities are hill towns: Williamsburg to the south, Goshen to the southwest, Ashfield to the west, and Buckland to the northwest. Goshen and Williamsburg, however, are in adjoining Hampshire County.

Conway is also affected by its location in relation to more distant neighboring communities, since many people are commuters and its high school students are transported to outside centers of population. It is 6 miles west of South Deerfield on State Route 116 and 7 miles east of Ashfield on the same route. It is 10 miles to Greenfield

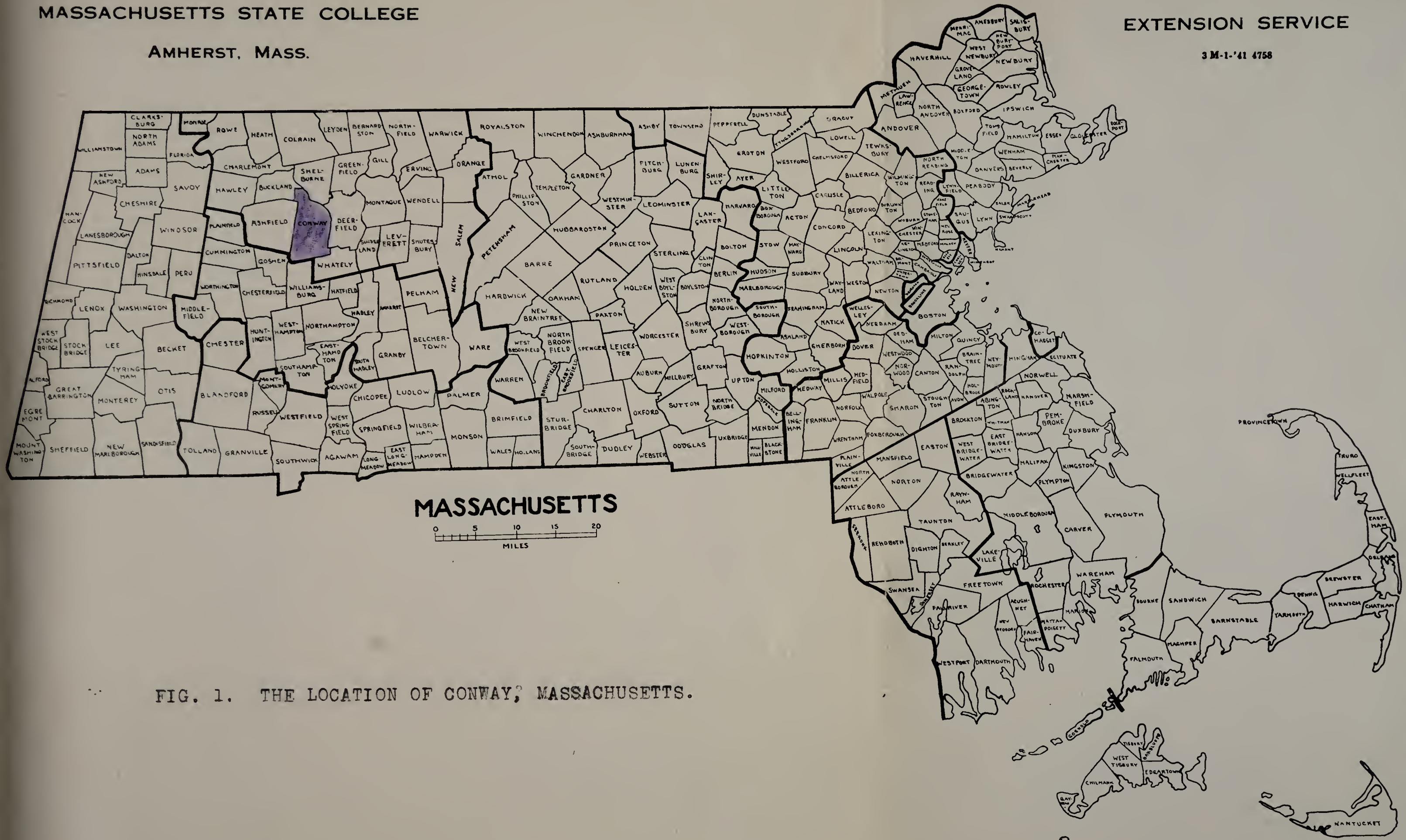


FIG. 1. THE LOCATION OF CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS.



which is the county seat and shopping center. Springfield is 36 miles to the south, and Boston 110 miles to the east.

Conway is favorably located for commuters who work in the enterprising valley towns of Greenfield and South Deerfield.

### Geology.

The principal rock in the central and northern parts of the town is Conway Schist which geologists believe to be of Silurian age.<sup>1</sup> This formation extends northward into Vermont, and as far south as Huntington. It is found westward to Hawley, and to Whately in the south east. In the southern part of the town a Post-Carboniferous granitic rock is found abounding in biotite, and known as Williamsburg Granodiorite. (See Fig. 2.)

The name, Conway Schist, has been used as this formation was first studied in Conway and because it shows the whole range of the series. The rock is made up of small black flakes of mica. There are many thin beds of quartz and relatively thick beds of black limestone that contain graphite and other minerals. In many places the limestone has been replaced by layers of hornblende schist.

---

1. Emerson, B. K., 1917, Geology of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. U.S.G.S. Bul. 597, p. 46.

FIG. 2. GEOLOGY MAP OF CONWAY.

Legend:



Silurian.



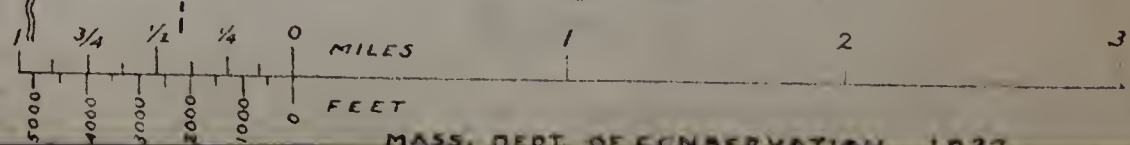
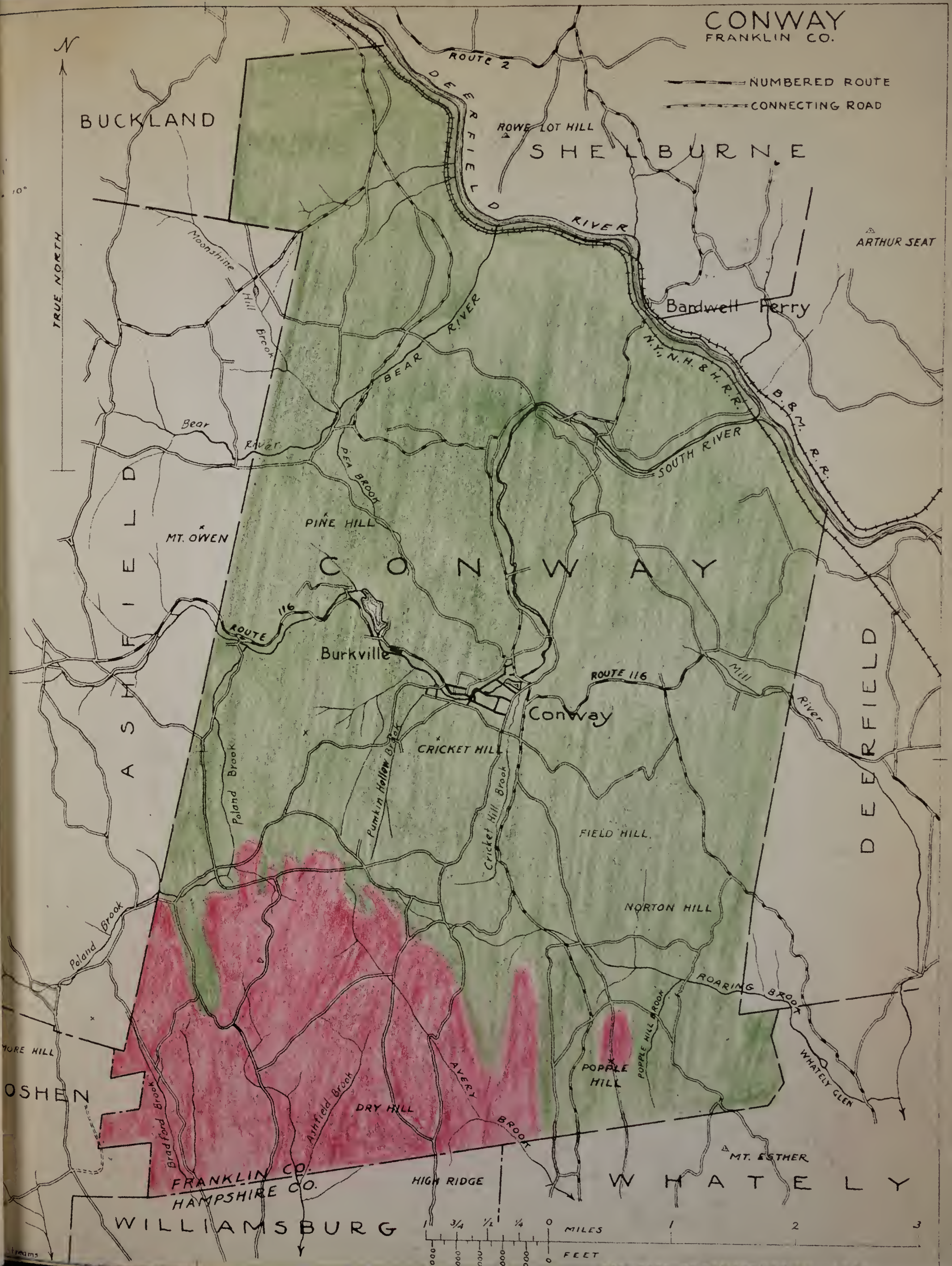
Late or Post  
Carboniferous.



CONWAY  
FRANKLIN CO.

TRUE NORTH  
15° 10'

NUMBERED ROUTE  
CONNECTING ROAD





Good mineral specimens which are often sought for by the collector and hobbyist may therefore be found in the Conway Schist.

These minerals are generally found in quartz lenses or beds where they contact the gray schist. The minerals found also include rutile, zoisite, lime-iron garnets which are colored black by carbon, quartz crystals, and rarely kyanite. There are two very notable locations for quartz crystals. One is on the west side of Field Hill where the crystals are found in large blocks of quartz that have broken away from the country rock, and the second location is in the ledge on the west bank of the South River immediately below the dam at Lake Wequanock. Doubly terminated clear crystals an inch long have been found at both places. Quartz crystals with galena have also been found in a field one thousand feet east of the Totman farm on the Bardwell Ferry Road.

In the extreme southern part of the town near Whately, large boulders of brown and yellow brecciated jasper are found.

Conway, then, has somewhat of a reputation, not only as the home of Conway Schist, but also as a worthy collecting ground for the amateur mineralogist. In passing it should also be mentioned that Edward Hitchcock, the noted Geologist of Amherst College, commenced his teaching career in this community.

### Topography.

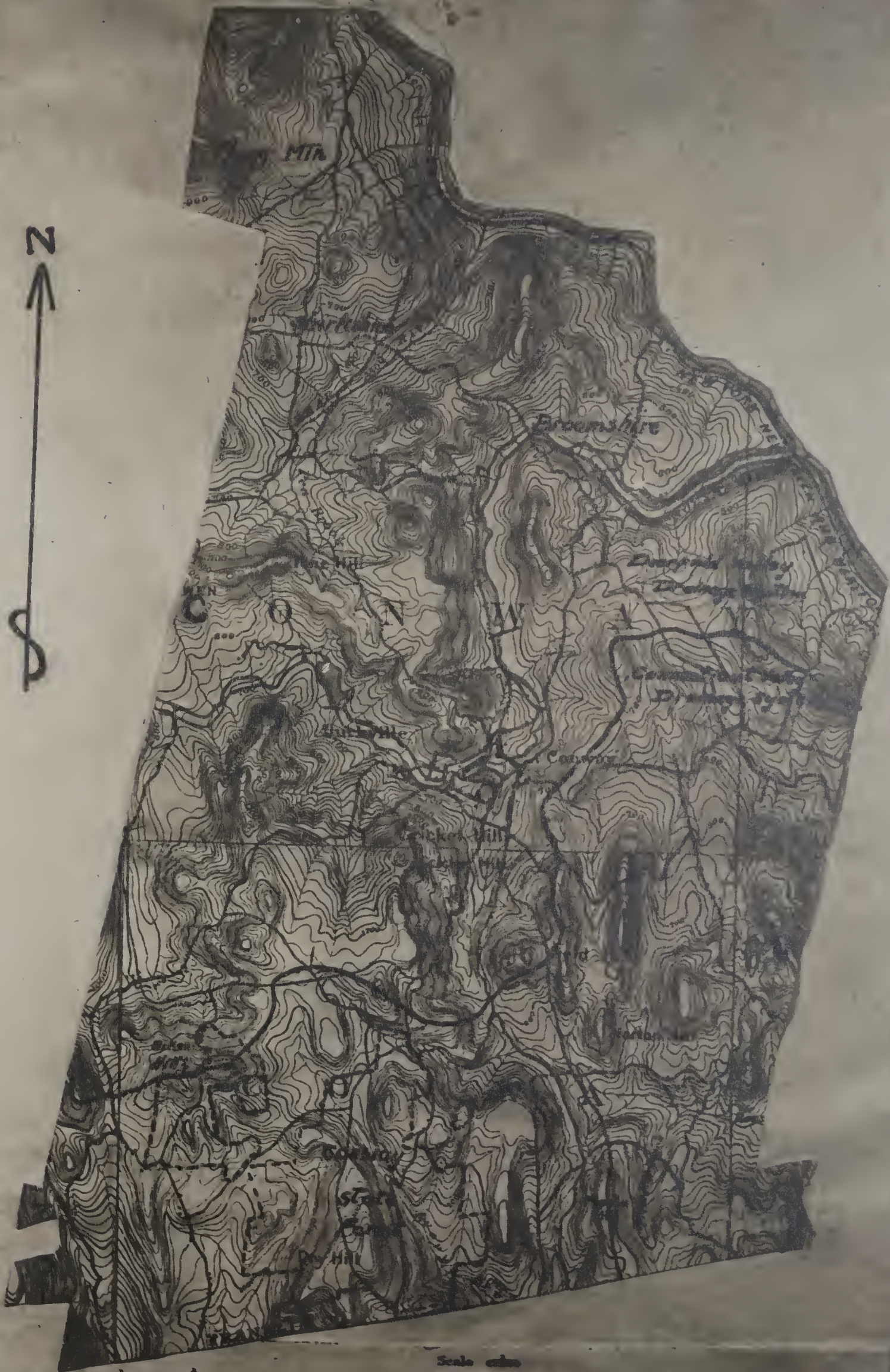
A noticeable feature of the topography of Conway is the southwest to northeast gradient of the tops of the hills which are relics of the former plateau (See Fig. 3). The highest hills in the extreme southwest part of the town attain an altitude of slightly more than 1500' above sea level and these hills get successively lower towards the Deerfield River until they are less than 300' in altitude. Fig. 4 is a west to east profile passing through Sikes Hill to Roaring Brook and the Deerfield town line.

The entire southern third of the town is a maturely dissected plateau with many steep slopes. This area is the "Alps of Conway". Already 1749 acres have been set aside as the Conway State Forest. As the forest is made up of several separated parcels, it is likely that new land areas will be absorbed eventually to make one continuous forest. (See Fig. 3.)

The rugged hill country in the southern part of the town, including some of the Conway State Forest, lies in the domain of the Northampton and Deerfield public watersheds. These last two areas, which lie partly in the State Forest, may be considered as recreational black-outs insofar as future recreational development probably is concerned, in that hikers and swimmers will probably

FIG. 3. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF CONWAY.



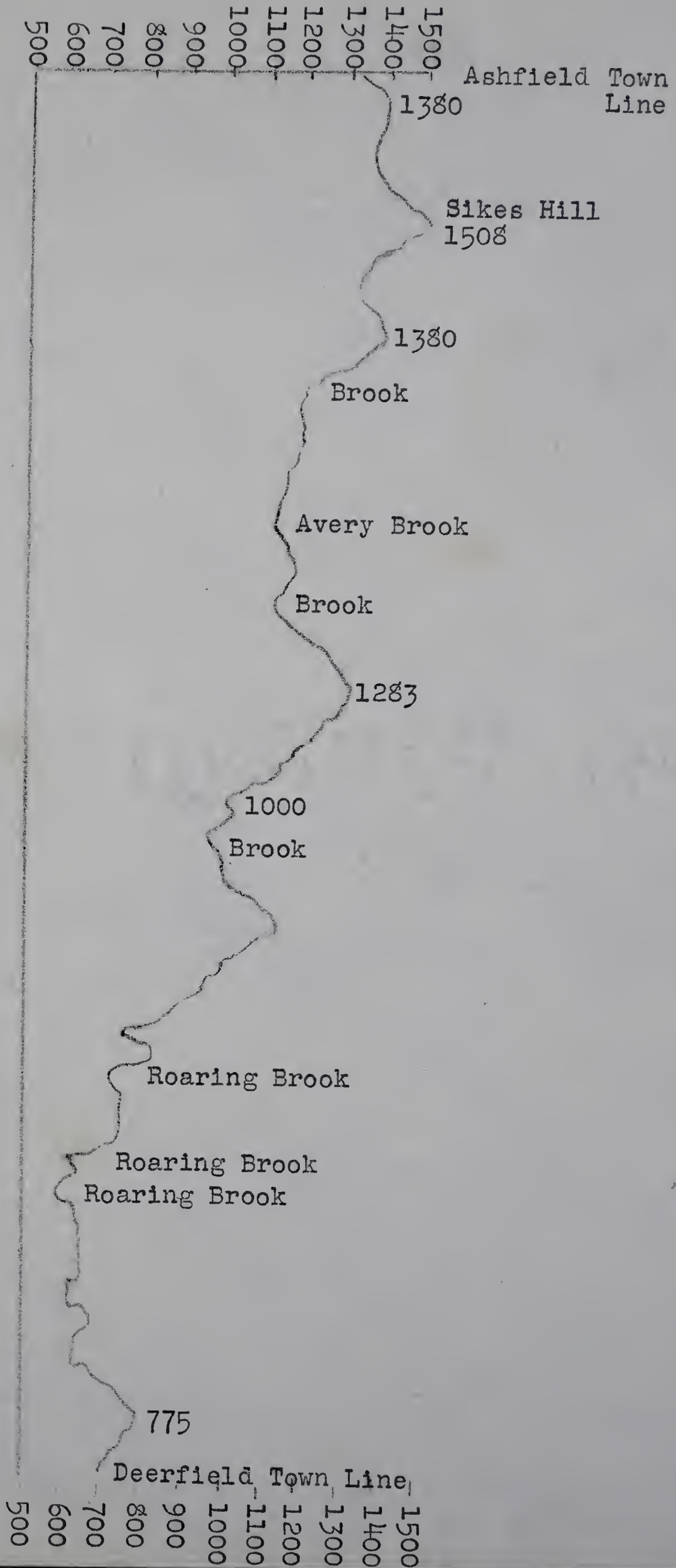


Contour interval 20 feet  
Datum is mean sea level.



FIG. 4. WEST TO EAST PROFILE PASSING THROUGH SIKES HILL TO  
ROARING BROOK AND THE DEERFIELD TOWN LINE.

Scale  $\frac{1}{31680}$



not be allowed. (See Fig. 5.)

The Deerfield River system is separated from the Connecticut River system by a high divide which starts in the northeastern part of the town and runs west-south-west and finally passes into Ashfield west of Sikes Hill (elev. 1508'). (See Fig. 3.)

Conway has four lowland areas that appear as great "tongues" on the map and extend up to the main river valleys. The Mill River and Roaring Brook "tongues" pass through two of these lowland areas into the Connecticut Valley. The Bear and South River "tongues" extend in a southerly direction from the Deerfield River Valley. The Deerfield River, which flows through a youthful "V" shaped valley, enters Conway at an altitude of 300' and passes over the town line into Deerfield at an altitude of 175'.

It may be of interest to mention that the elevation of the center of the village near the Field Memorial Library is 558', while the upper part of the village (Burkeville) is 650'.

Conway, like its namesake in New Hampshire, is adaptable to winter sports. Not only because of suitable topography, but also because of favorable climate and location, the development of a ski area in Conway should be given important consideration. The proximity of the Connecticut Valley with its many colleges and universities,

FIG. 5. RECREATIONAL BLACK-OUT AREA.

Legend:

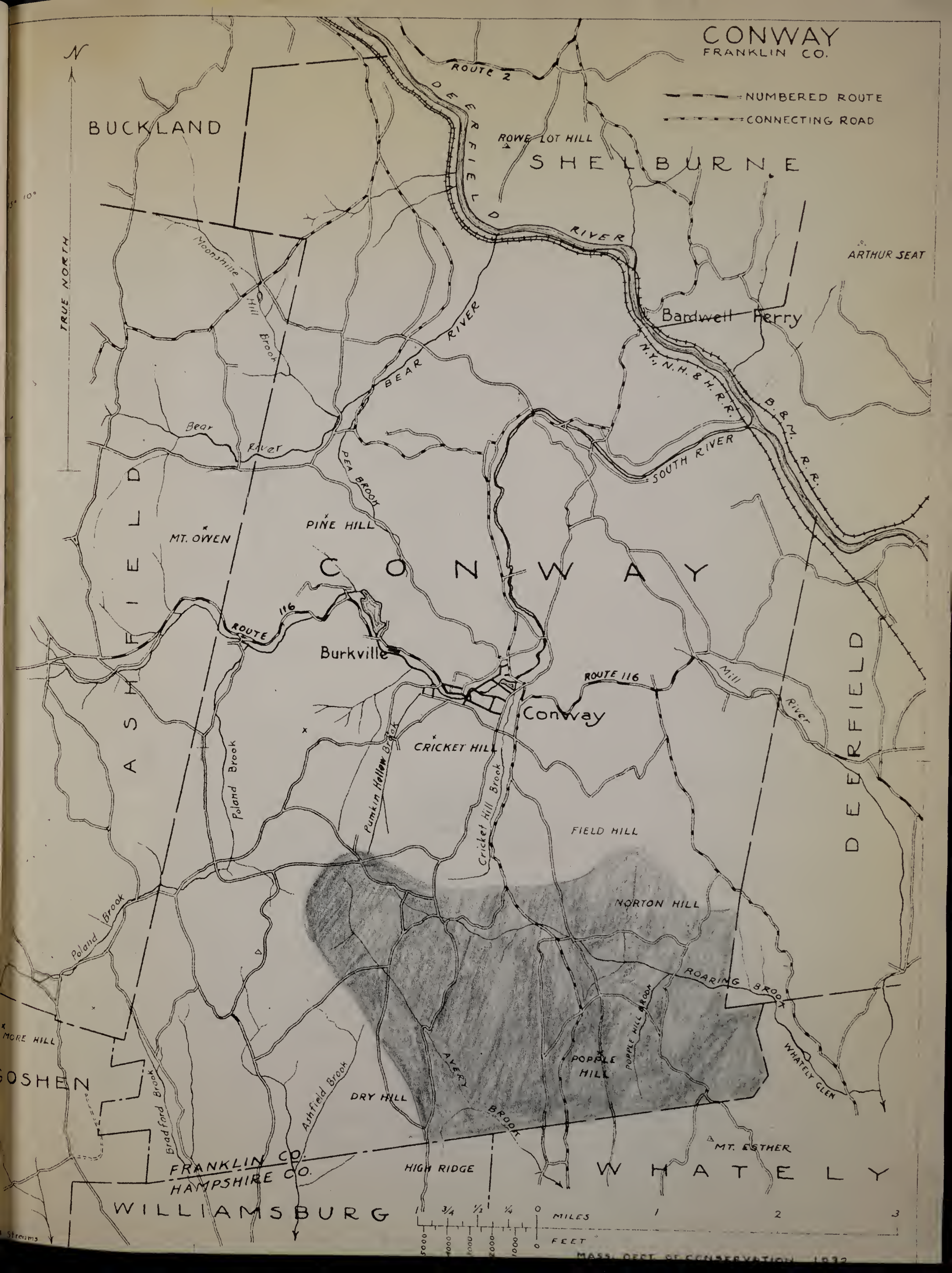


Recreational Black-  
out Area.



CONWAY  
FRANKLIN CO.

--- NUMBERED ROUTE  
--- CONNECTING ROAD



BUCKLAND

SHELBURNE

ARTHUR SEAT

Bardwell Ferry

Burkville

Conway

CRICKET HILL

FIELD HILL

NORTON HILL

POPPLE HILL

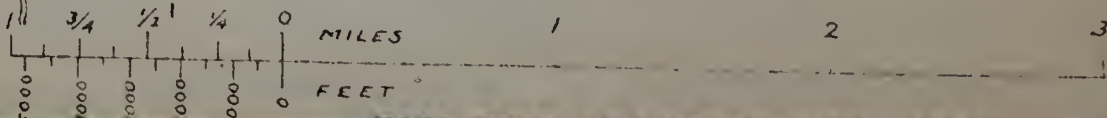
MT. ESTHER

FRANKLIN CO.  
HAMPSHIRE CO.

WILLIAMSBURG

HIGH RIDGE

W H A T E L Y





large cities, and fine railroad and bus transportation is a valuable asset.

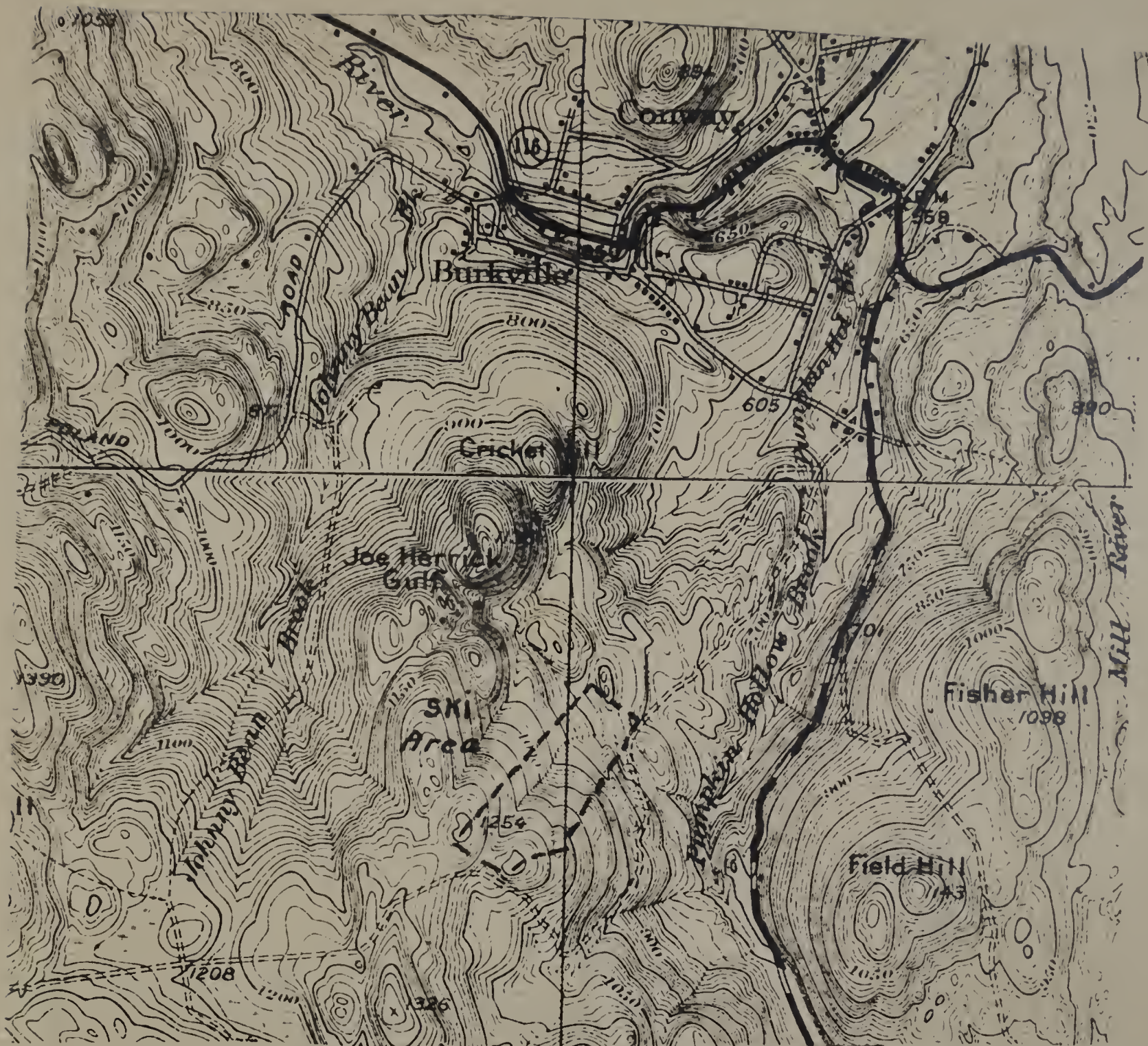
One excellent site for a ski tow is south of Joe Herrick Gulf (Fig. 6). Note that the two knobs are a little more than 1200' in elevation. The tow could begin between these two prominences, in what appears to be a natural snow bowl (Figs. 7 and 8), and run in a northeasterly direction for nearly half a mile. This will enable a skier to drop 350' in the total run. A 20 per cent slope is considered good for intermediate groups.

This winter sports area can best be reached by passing through Pumpkin Hollow and up the wood road to Parker's sugar house. This road appears to be abandoned but is maintained for town dump purposes. A short hike past the sugar house will bring one to the top of the ridge and to the beginning of the proposed ski site.

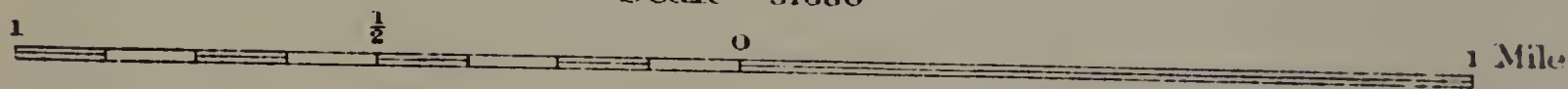
A description of the topography is not complete without mention of the panoramic view from Field Hill (1143') which is one and one-half miles south of the village. The extensive view (see Fig. 9) from this peak includes Mt. Tom and Mt. Holyoke to the south; Mt. Toby, Mt. Sugarloaf, and the Connecticut Valley to the east; and the communities of Conway, Shelburne, and Greenfield to

FIG. 6. A PROPOSED SKI AND WINTER SPORTS AREA.





Scale  $\frac{1}{31680}$



Contour interval 10 feet





FIG. 7. THE SNOWBOWL AT THE PROPOSED SKI AREA.



FIG. 8. A VIEW OF THE PROPOSED SKI AREA WHICH  
SLOPES TO THE NORTHEAST.

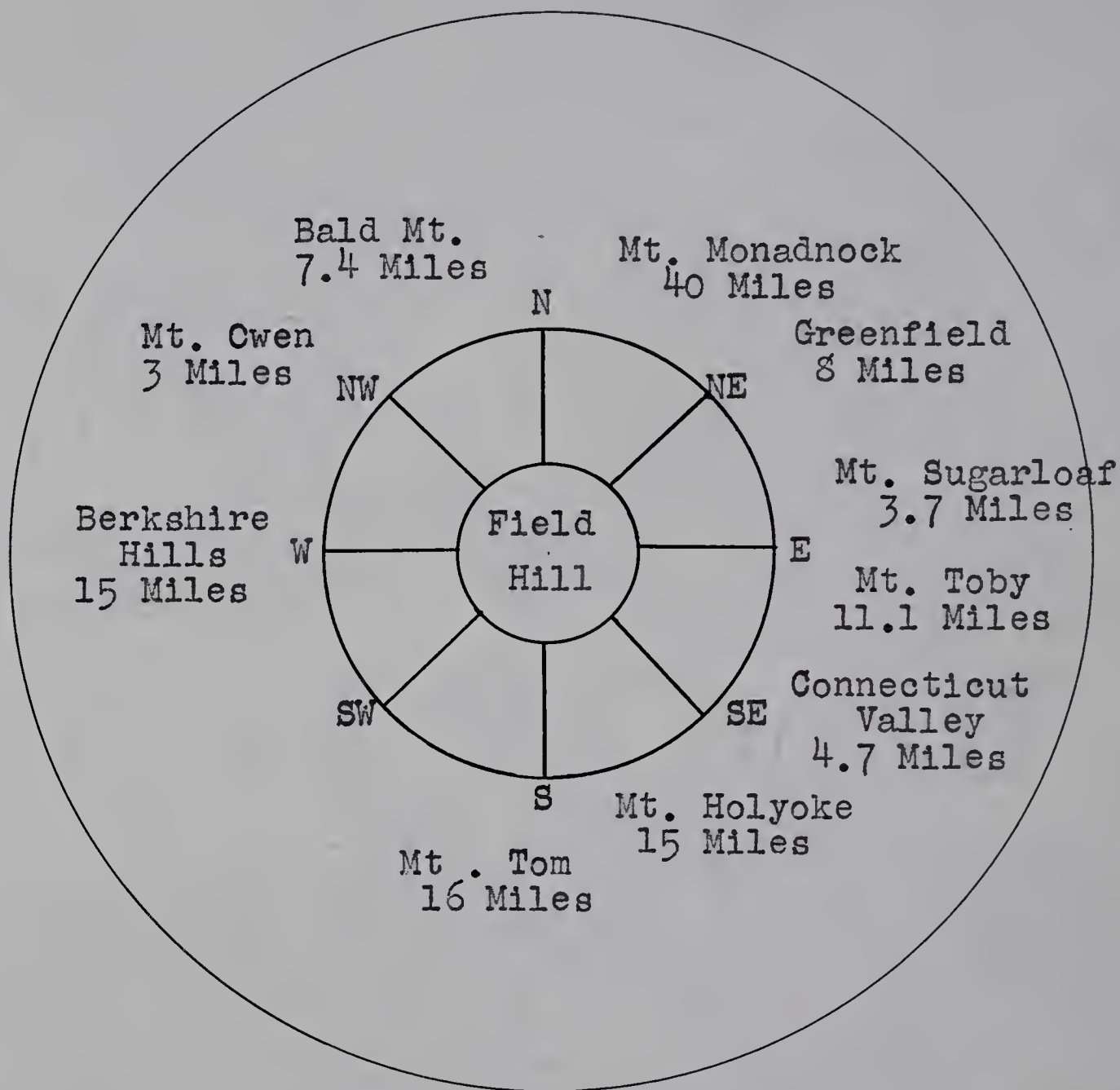


FIG. 9. SCENIC LOCATOR FROM FIELD HILL.



the north. Mt. Monadnock is visible in the distant north-east on a clear day. In other words, Field Hill is a desirable look-out for people who not only would admire the complete landscape but would be interested in the geologic story that is portrayed. A fire tower located here might also serve as an excellent educational facility.

### Soil.

Most of the soils of Conway have a compact substratum, and are derived from the country rock, the Conway Schist. As a result of the many small beds of limestone in the country rock, a strong alkaline influence is shown in much of the soil, particularly in the Colrain loams. Glacial activity resulted in the breakdown of much of the country rock and vast quantities of soil and rock debris was piled into deep till or boulder clay areas.<sup>1</sup>

Fig. 10 is a soil map which together with its classification has been adapted from the State Planning Board soil map of Conway.



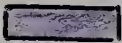



The predominately best soil which is moist and of good texture is found in the lower hills and valleys of the central and northern parts of the town. There are two

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1. Latimer, W. J., Smith, R., and Howlett, C., 1929, Soil Survey of Franklin County, Massachusetts. U.S.D.A. Series 1929, No. 9, p. 25.

FIG. 10. SOIL MAP OF CONWAY.

Legend:

-  Moist and good texture
-  Soils moist but somewhat rough
-  Droughty soils (sandy loam and  
loamy sand series)
-  Rough and stony soil
-  Wet soils year round
-  Wet stony soils year round



CONWAY  
FRANKLIN CO.

--- NUMBERED ROUTE  
--- CONNECTING ROAD



TRUE NORTH

BUCKLAND

SHELBURNE

ARTHUR SEAT

Bardwell Ferry

MT. OWEN

CONWAY

Burkville

Conway

CRICKET HILL

FIELD HILL

NORTON HILL

POPPLE HILL

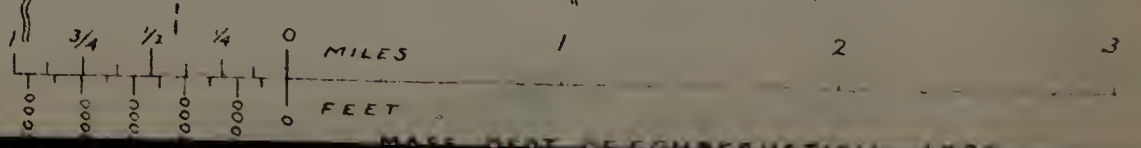
MT. ESTHER

FRANKLIN CO.  
HAMPSHIRE CO.

WILLIAMSBURG

HIGH RIDGE

WHATELY





types: (1) the Colrain loams and (2) the Hollis loams. These two soils are represented by green on the map and are classified on the sector circle graph (Fig. 11) as good land suitable for agriculture. It is interesting to compare this land with the amount of land of medium and poor suitability for agriculture.

Soil which has medium suitability for agriculture includes those that are moist but somewhat rough and stony, shown in blue, and droughty soils shown in purple. When droughty soils (usually soils of the sandy loam and loamy sand series) are well watered, they are classed with the soils that are both moist and of good texture.

The predominatingly poor, rough, and stony soil is shown in orange. Other poor soils include the wet soils shown in red and the wet stony soils shown in yellow.

It is highly significant to note that the good soils are located in many of the valleys and in the lower rolling country, and that those are of medium adaptability and are found in uplands and foothills and that most of the poor soil is found in rough hilly sections and in the swamps. Scenic spots where ski tows, bridle trails, water falls, hikes, state forests, and other outdoor recreational areas can be established are usually in rugged areas where

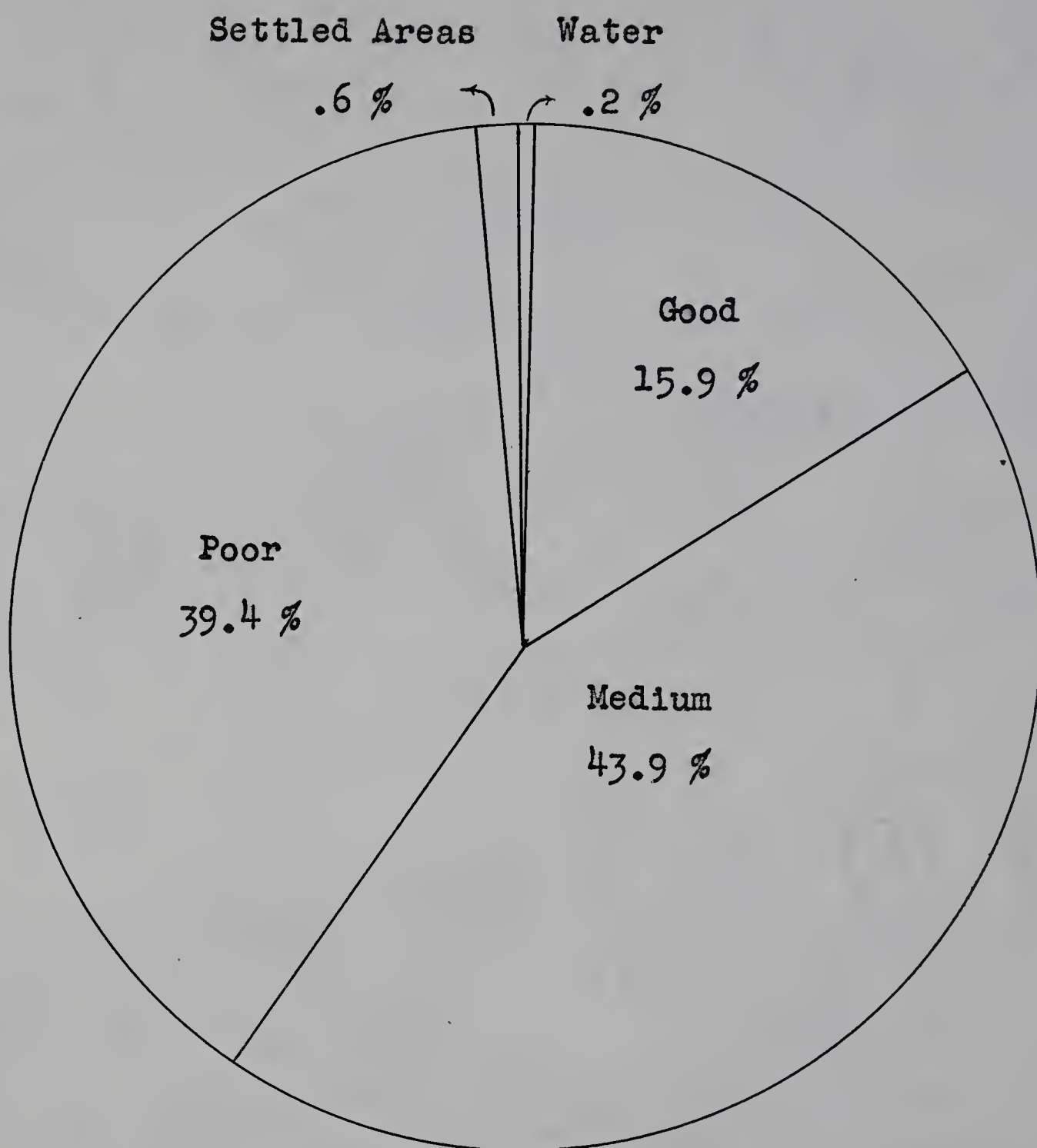


FIG. 11. PERCENTAGE OF LAND SUITABILITY FOR AGRICULTURE, 1940.

Source: Mass. Exp. Sta. Bul. 387.

the land is unsuitable for agriculture. Therefore there need be no conflict between outdoor recreational areas and agricultural areas.

#### Cover or Land Use.

United States Agricultural Census figures reveal that there has been a marked decrease in the number of farms in the last twenty years. Correspondingly there has been a decrease in the amount of land in farms, and in improved farm land. In 1925, 16,776 acres were in farm land, while in 1945, there were 13,014 acres of farm land. This represents a 31 per cent decrease in improved land, in 20 years between 1925 and 1945. Improved land, which includes crop land, idle or fallow land, and plowable pasture, amounted to 2,596 acres in 1945 as compared with 3,788 acres in 1925, or a decrease of 31 per cent in 20 years.

Fig. 12 is a sectored circle graph of land utilization, for Conway adapted from the 1945 Agricultural Census figures. Although 55 per cent of the total land area was in woodland in 1945, it is expected that there will be a further increase in the amount of woodland because of the decrease in farms and farm land which goes back to submarginal conditions.

A land utilization or cover map of Conway, which



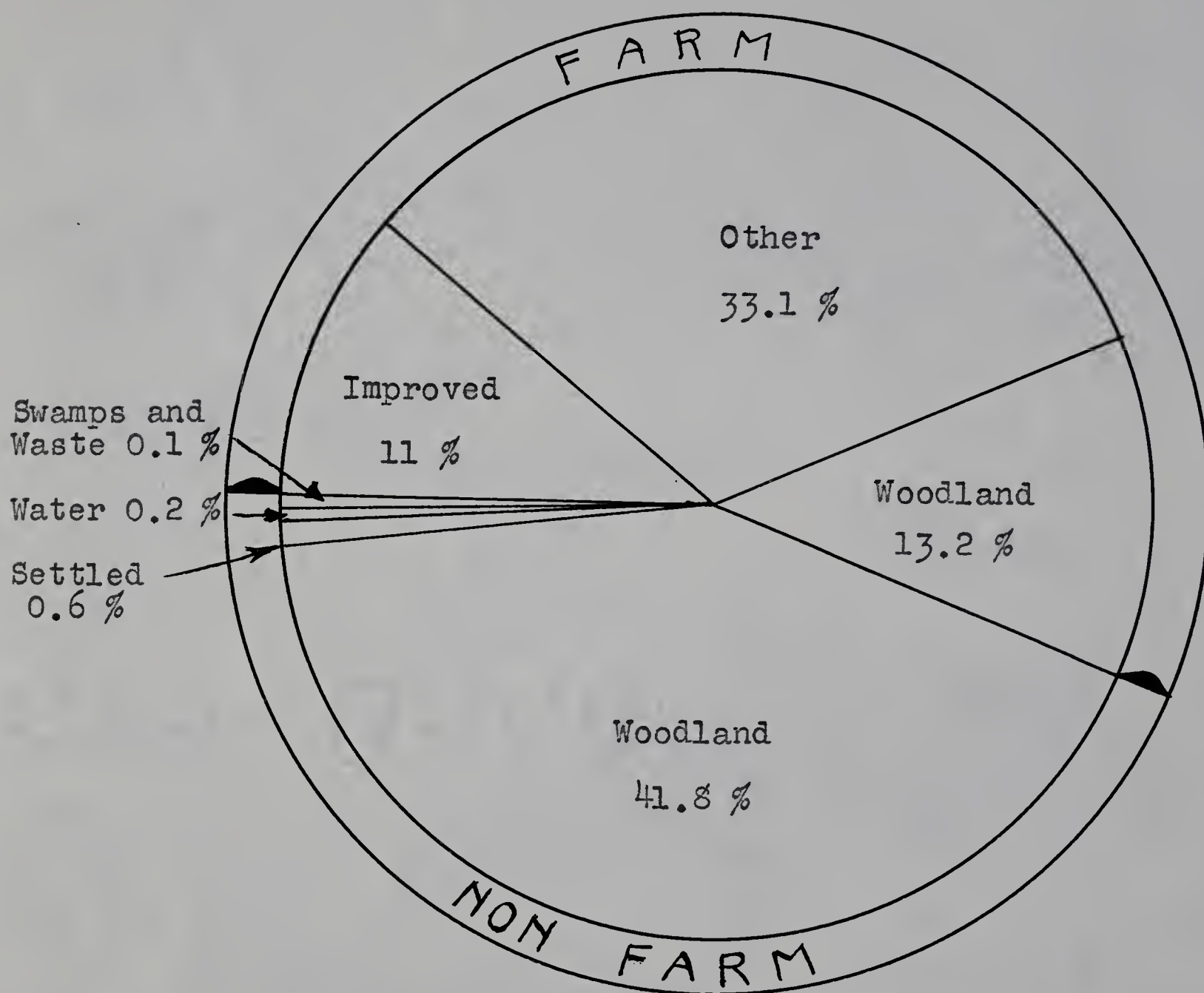


FIG. 12. LAND UTILIZATION IN CONWAY, 1945.

Source: U. S. Agri. Census, 1945.

is based on the Massachusetts State Planning Board Utilization Map (Sept. 1939) is portrayed in Fig. 13. This study reveals the distribution of farm land, including tilled, pasture, and orchard areas, the characteristic forest cover and thickly settled areas.






Fruit growing has decreased considerably over the last two decades. There are now only a few significant orchards. Twenty-five years ago it was not uncommon to find a small orchard close to each farm. Figure 14 is a picture of one of many abandoned orchards that are to be found in this region.

On the abandoned Field Hill Road, 40 cellar holes reveal a story of wrong land use. This area was extensively farmed, and later it served as open pasture land. A recent picture of Twin Hills (Fig. 15), which is located just south of Field Hill Road, shows how forest land is slowly encroaching and returning this area to its original forested state.

Most of the extensive wood land areas are destined to be watersheds and state forests. State forests mean recreational land use. The farm woodlot should be managed and utilized like any other crop. The improved land, which has decreased 31 per cent, will soon be stabilized as permanent agricultural land for homesteading.

FIG. 13. LAND UTILIZATION MAP.

Legend:

	Thickly settled areas
	Forest land
	Orchards
	Pasture
	Tilled land

Forests:

HD	Hardwood dense
CD	Conifers dense
MD	Mixed dense
O	Not more than 20% cover



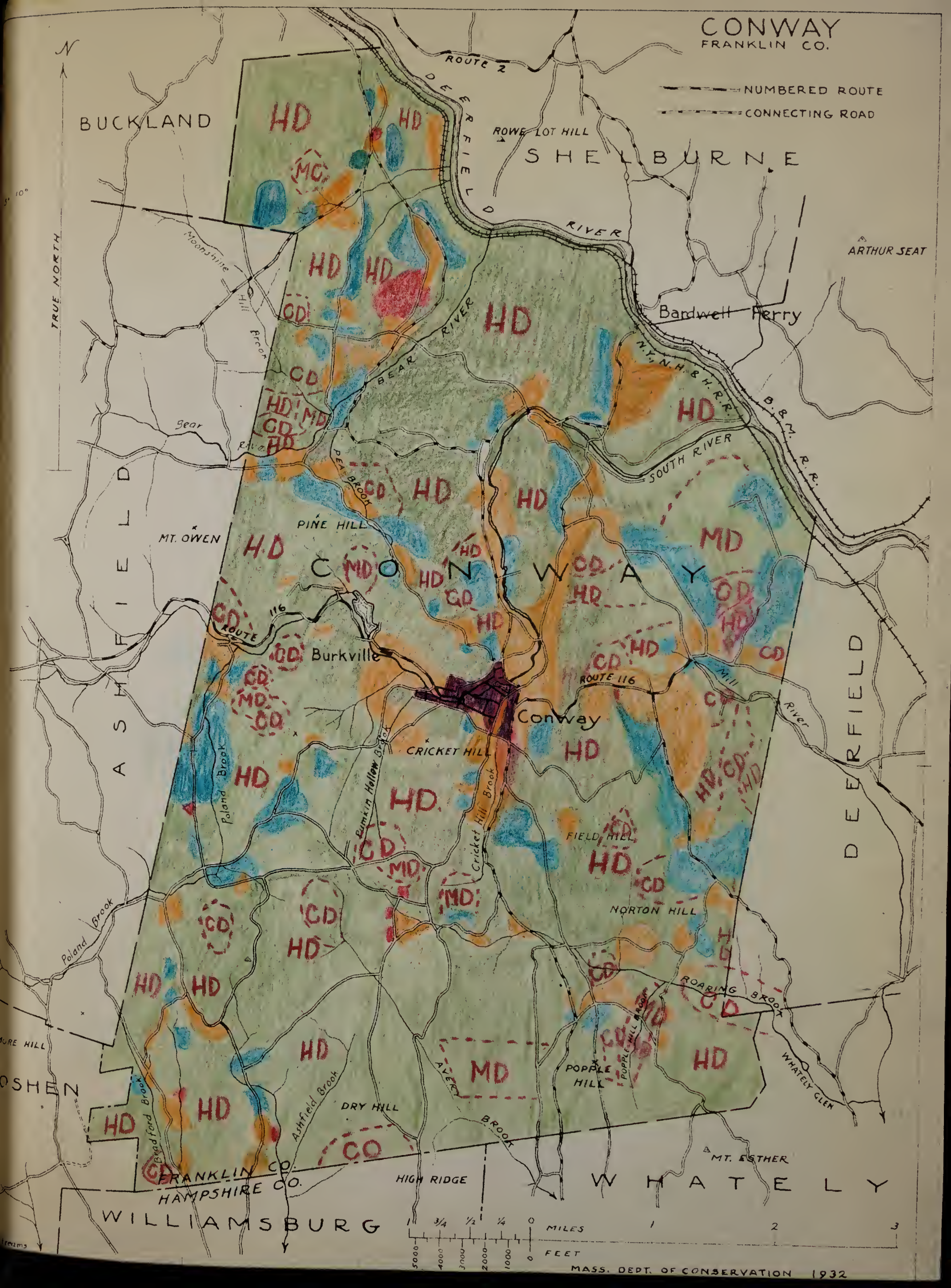






FIG. 14. A TYPICAL ABANDONED ORCHARD.



FIG. 15. THE ENCROACHMENT OF THE NEW FOREST ON TWIN HILLS.



Water.

Only .2 per cent of the total area of Conway is water which is mostly in the form of streams.

The northern two-thirds of Conway is drained by the north flowing Bear and South Rivers which empty into the master stream - namely the Deerfield River. The small Mill River flows in an easterly direction paralleling Route 116 and eventually goes to the Connecticut River. (See Fig. 16.)

Within the town limits of Conway these easily accessible rivers are well stocked with brook, brown, and rainbow trout and are heavily fished. The Deerfield River is one of the two best trout streams in the Commonwealth.

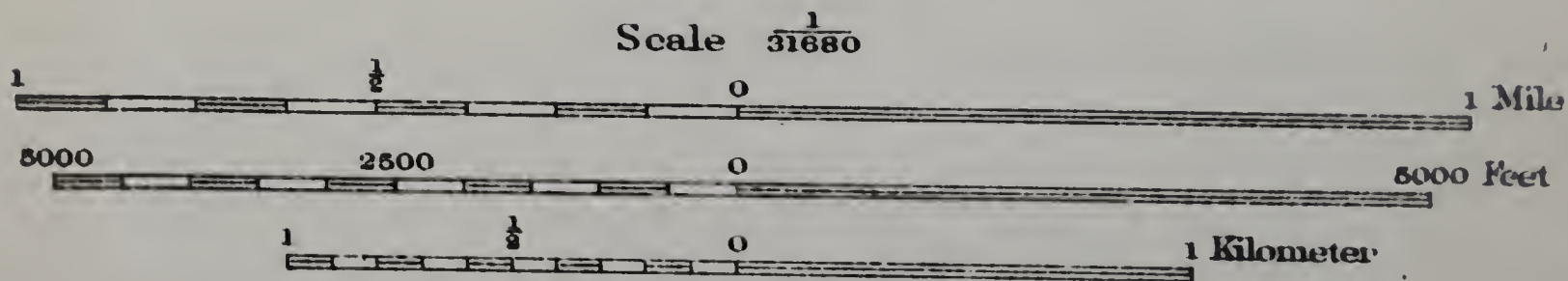
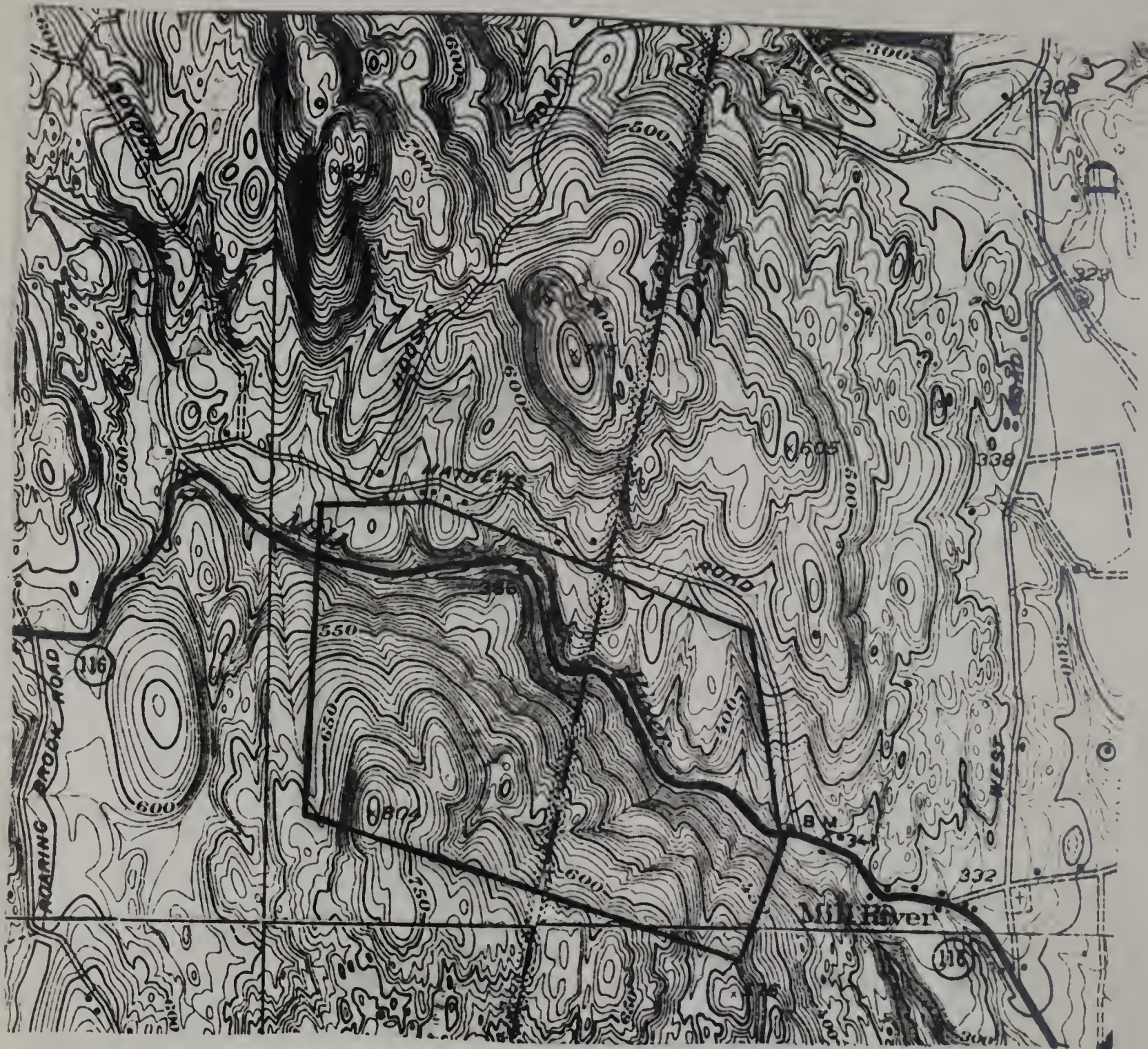
A study of a recent fish survey report gives interesting data relative to trout fishing in Conway. (See Table I.)

The lesser branches of the Bear and South Rivers, namely, Poland, Bean, Pumpkin Hollow, Pea, Moonshine, and Senecke Brooks might serve as breeding streams since the fish, in most cases, are too small to fulfill the law or to satisfy the angler.

Most fishing will be in northern Conway. Avery Brook and its tributaries in the southern part of the town form the upper reaches of the Northampton water supply and

FIG. 16. THE MILL RIVER VALLEY.





Contour interval 10 feet

Fig 16



TABLE I.  
RECOMMENDED STREAM STOCKING.<sup>1</sup>

Name	Town	Length (Miles)	Volume (Cu.Ft. /Sec.)	Pool Grade	Food Grade	Stocking Policy	Frequency (Per Year)
Deerfield River	All towns	39.4		B	2	Brook 10"-12" Brown 10"-12" Rainbow 10"-12"	1 Staggered
South River	Ashfield Conway	11.9	72	B	2+	Brook 6"-8" Brown 6"-10" Rainbow 8"-10" 2400	325 2725 1
Bean Brook	Conway	0.9	0.3	C+	1	Too small volume	
Poland Brook	Ashfield Conway	5.7	16.3	B	1-	Possible posting	
Pumpkin Hollow Brook	Conway	1.6	2.1	B-	1-	Good natural reproduction; small	
Conway Brook	Conway	1.9	2.3	A-	1-	Adequate natural reproduction	
Bear River	Ashfield Conway	7.2	30.8	B+	1-	Brook 6"-10" Brown 6"-10" Rainbow 6"-10" Rainbow fingerlings 2880	1 1 1 2
Pea Brook	Conway	1.8	1.4	B+	1-	Too small	
Moonshine Hill Brook	Ashfield Buckland Conway	3.0	13.0	B+	2	Brook 6"-8"	210 1
Senecke Brook	Conway	1.6	1.0	B+	2+	Too small	

1. Schwartz, A. H., 1942, Fisheries Survey Report. Commonwealth of Massachusetts,  
Dept. of Conservation, pp. 108-110.

fishing is no longer permitted. Roaring Brook is in the southeast part of the town, and at present is well stocked with trout. However, it is probable that fishing will be prohibited in the near future because it is now part of the Deerfield public water supply.

Another recreational value of water is natural scenic beauty. Conway is well endowed with several fine locations that should be preserved for future generations.

First of all let us consider the Mill River Valley area as shown on the maps in Figures 16 and 36. It straddles the Deerfield-Conway town line. Route 116, which is an important east-west traffic artery, passes diagonally through the valley. The gorge is of high recreational value for roadside picnic areas as shown in the photographs (See Figs. 17 and 18). Because of its accessibility, rugged topography, forest cover, and good fishing, it should be preserved at once.

Natural ponds of any size are practically non-existent in Conway. There are several sites where former mill ponds could be restored for summer and winter sports and camping.

Lake Wequanock is the only significant body of water left. (See Figs. 19, 20, 21, and 36.) A dam 85' high holds back the lake which is quite shallow because





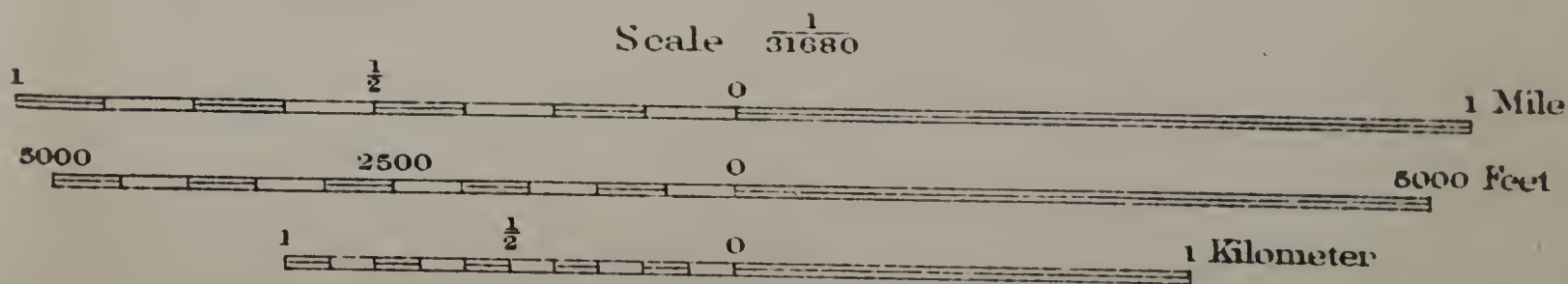
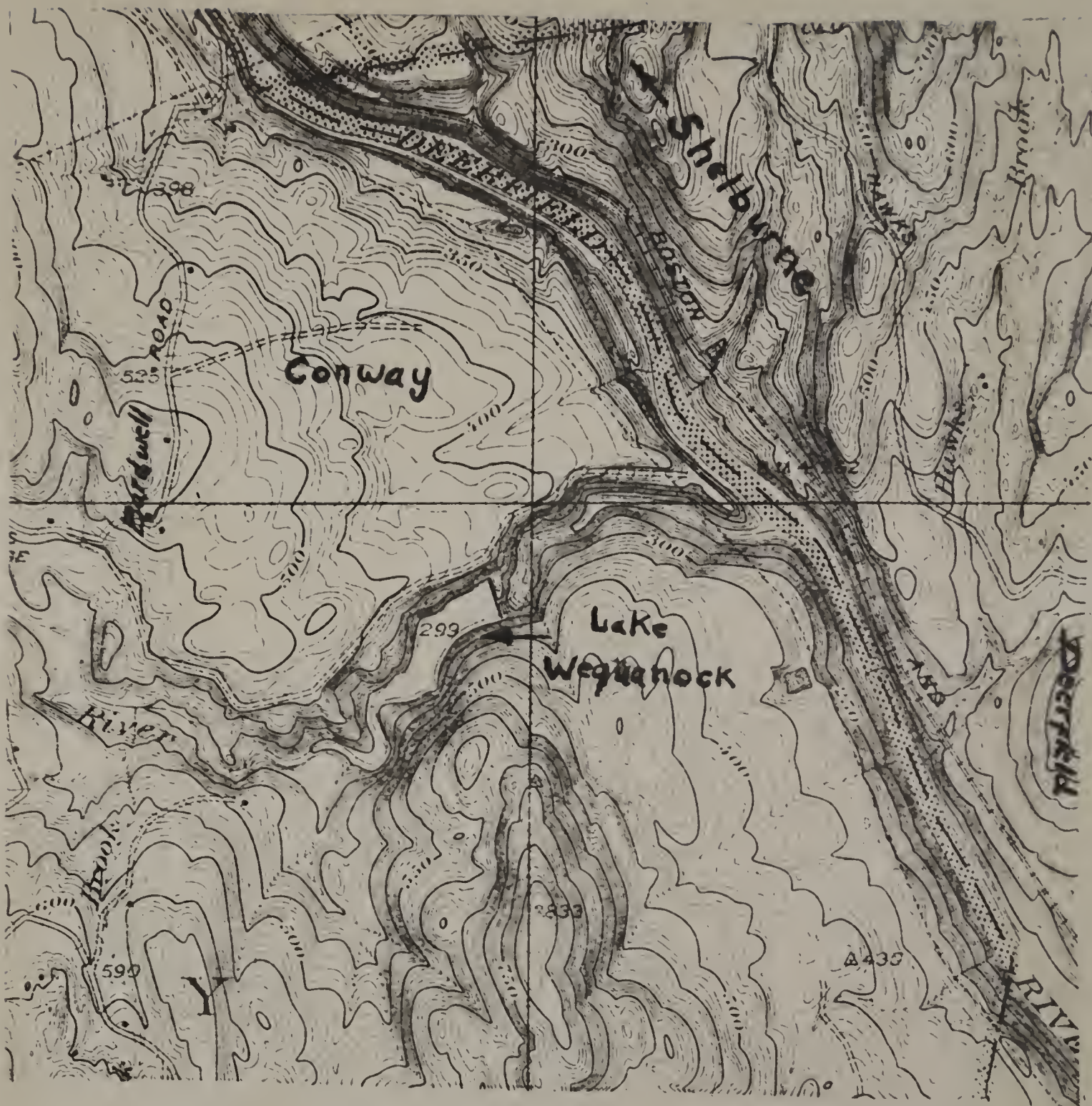
FIG. 17. A PORTION OF THE MILL RIVER VALLEY LOOKING WEST.





FIG. 18. ANOTHER PORTION OF THE MILL RIVER VALLEY LOOKING EAST.





Contour interval 10 feet





FIG. 20. LAKE WEQUANOCK.





FIG. 21. THE "BIG DAM" AT LAKE WEQUANOCK.

of much sedimentation. There is still plenty of water for fishing and fishermen report good bass fishing in the lake and good trout fishing above the lake.

The land south of Lake Wequanock to Mathews and Hoosac Roads is largely run down pasture and brush land, submarginal in character. In anticipation of Lake Wequanock, and the Mill River Valley Roadside Picnic Area, it is recommended that the State Conservation Department eventually reforest and develop this land as a state forest. By doing this, a large recreational area would be developed where fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and other forms of wholesome recreation could be enjoyed.

#### Climate.

The people of Conway can expect relatively warm summers and cold winters. The summers are sufficiently warm enough to permit good yields of corn and tobacco in the low lying regions.

In comparing the town with other sections of the state, it is interesting to note that the winters average 2° colder than the eastern and southeastern part of Massachusetts, and that the summers are 2° to 4° colder than eastern and southeastern Massachusetts. The temperature averages 2° colder than the temperature of north-



eastern Massachusetts in the summer.<sup>1</sup>

Killing frost can be expected until mid-May and to begin about the 21st of September in the higher areas, and as late as June 8th and as early as August 22nd in the low areas of the town.<sup>2</sup> The average growing season is therefore about 150 days, while further west in the Berkshires it is 140 days, and in southeastern Massachusetts it is 180 to 190 days.

The growing season is about two weeks longer in the Connecticut Valley than in Conway.

The average depth of frost penetration is 30".

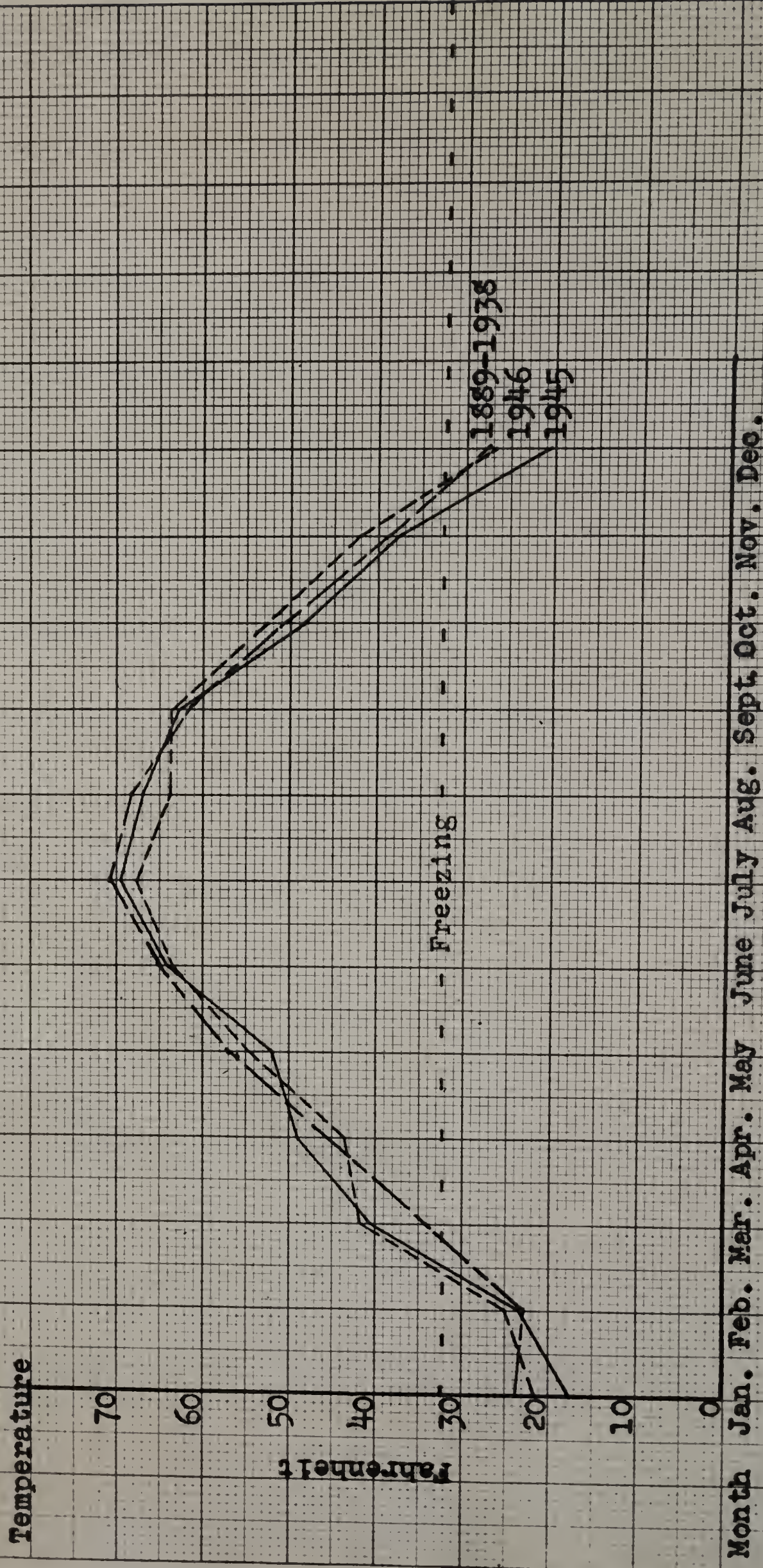
Fig. 22 shows the normal mean temperature for 1945 and 1946 as recorded by the Weather Bureau at Shelburne Falls, and the normal mean temperature at Amherst for a 50-year period, 1889-1938. The temperature range at Shelburne Falls and Conway is about the same, and these figures are characteristic of the average temperature over a period of several years.

Rainfall throughout the year is fairly even. There is slightly more precipitation in the summer and fall. Average precipitation is between 40" and 50".

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1. Mass. State Planning Board Report. 1936. P. 174.
  2. Gunness, G. I., 1939, Meteorological Records: A Fifty Year Summary, 1889-1938. Mass. Agri. Exp. Sta. Bul. 367, p. 19.



FIG. 22. NORMAL MEAN TEMPERATURE AT SHELburnE FALLS FOR 1945, 1946,  
AND AT AMHERST, 1889-1938.



Sources: U.S.D.C. Climatological Data, 1945-1946.  
Mass. Exp. Sta. Bul. 367.



Hail and flash floods, sometimes brought on by sudden thunder showers during the summer, are most destructive to tobacco and corn and result in serious soil erosion. Soil washed from the farms of Conway are eventually deposited in the Connecticut Valley. (See Fig. 23.)

Fog occurs most frequently in the spring and fall.

The precipitation data in Table II is adapted from the Maps in the Massachusetts State Planning Report for 1936. Generally the precipitation pattern in Conway conforms with the state average.

During the winter there is between 4 and 4.5 hours of bright sunshine on a clear day as compared with 8 to 8.5 hours of bright sunshine in the summer.

The average number of cloudy days may exceed the average number of clear days. There are 100-120 clear days as compared with 120-140 cloudy days.

The average snowfall in Conway exceeds the Amherst Weather Bureau average of 47.78" by several inches. This is because more of the precipitation in Conway falls as snow in the winter whereas in Amherst it falls as rain. There is adequate snow in Conway for at least a nine week winter sports season.



FIG. 23. INUNDATION OF FARM LAND ALONG THE MILL RIVER IN SOUTH  
DEERFIELD - THE RESULT OF A FLASH FLOOD IN CONWAY.



TABLE II.  
PRECIPITATION DATA.<sup>1</sup>

	Conway	Average for State
Annual	40"-45"	40"-45"
Warm Season (April through Sept.)	20"	20"
Winter (Dec. through Feb.)	8"-10"	10"
Spring (March through May)	8"-10"	10"
Summer (June through August)	12"	10"
Fall (Sept. through Nov.)	10"-12"	10"
10 Wettest Years	50"	50"
10 Driest Years	35"	30"-35"
10 Driest Summers	6"	6"-8"
10 Wettest Summers	16"	16"
No. of Days 0.01 or more	120-140	120-140
No. of Days with Hail	1-2	1-2
No. of Days with Fog	15-20	15-60
No. of Days with Thunderstorms	20-30	20-30

1. Mass. State Planning Board Report, 1936, p. 174.<sup>12</sup>

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF CONWAY.



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THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF CONWAY.

Background.

Conway, Massachusetts was named for General Henry Conway, a popular British leader who favored the repeal of the Stamp Act. Its settlement began in 1762. In 1767, Governor Francis Bernard signed the act which set it aside as a separate township. The first meeting house which was also used as a center for government was erected in 1769, and the first school house was built in 1773.

At first the people were occupied with agriculture. The upland in the vicinity of Cricket Hill, south of the first village (Pumpkin Hollow), was farmed intensively for a period of fifty years. However, the steep slope and stony soil proved unsuitable and farmers moved to the bottom lands of the South River. The plateau farms of the upland to the north and east of the village are still used for agriculture. Since about 1885 Conway, being a hill town, has had a gradual decrease both in acreage tilled and in number of farms.

The largest percentage of farm income comes from dairying. Since 1920, Conway has remained primarily an agricultural and residential community.

Early industrial enterprises included a number of saw mills, grist mills, tanneries, a "fulling mill", and a mill for extracting oil from flax seed and cotton seed. The Conway Manufacturing Company built a large brick woolen mill in 1846. This period (1846-1917) was a large diversified industrial era in Conway that ended when the DeWolfe and Hassell Shoe Company closed in 1917. From 1895 to 1920 an electric railroad served the town by hauling freight, mail, and passengers. The electric line connected with the Boston and Maine Railroad which still is an important east-west railroad artery running along the Deerfield River.<sup>1</sup>

The advent of automotive transportation, increasing industrial expenses, and the centralization of industry were largely responsible for the rapid decline of manufacturing in Conway.

The largest part of present day population is composed of full time farmers, part time farmers, commuters, local business men, public service workers, and laborers.

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1. The History of Conway, Massachusetts. 1917.  
pp. 1-345.



### Population.

Conway, a Berkshire Hill town, is one of the most sparsely settled towns in the commonwealth. By 1946 the population density was 22.9 inhabitants per square mile.

Fig. 24 is a map of Conway and surrounding towns indicating population density.<sup>1</sup> Generally the Connecticut Valley towns are more densely populated.

The density of the population of Conway has dropped from 1915 to 1940 between 20 per cent and 29.5 per cent.

Changes in total population in Conway from 1910 to 1935 shows that it has changed more than in any surrounding town.<sup>2</sup> (See Fig. 25.)

From 1930 to 1947, deaths exceeded births by 11 per cent.<sup>3</sup> The number of young people is declining.

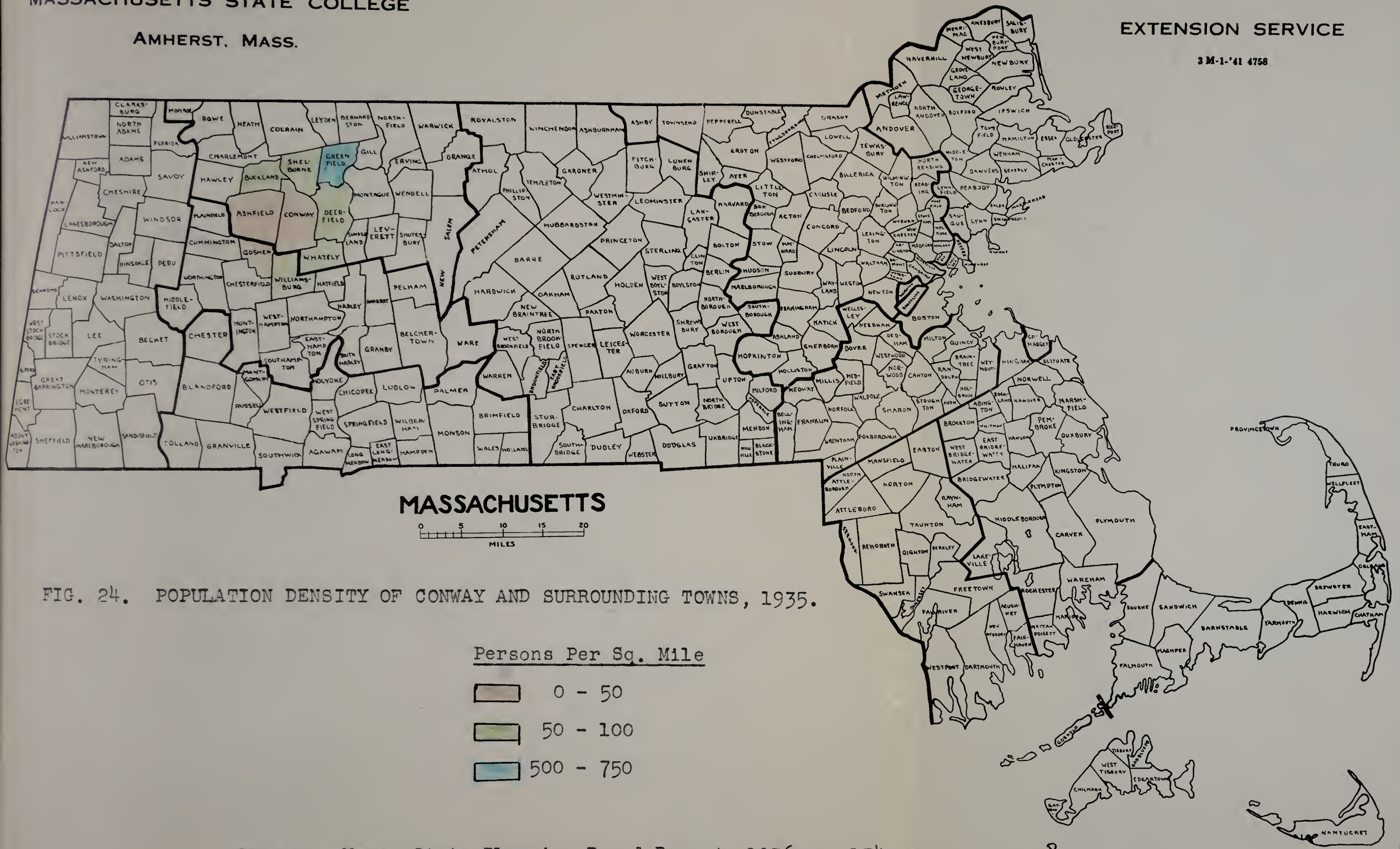
Conway attained its greatest population in 1790, when it was at its peak, 2,092. At that time Conway was the third largest town in western Massachusetts, being exceeded only by West Springfield and Westfield. The

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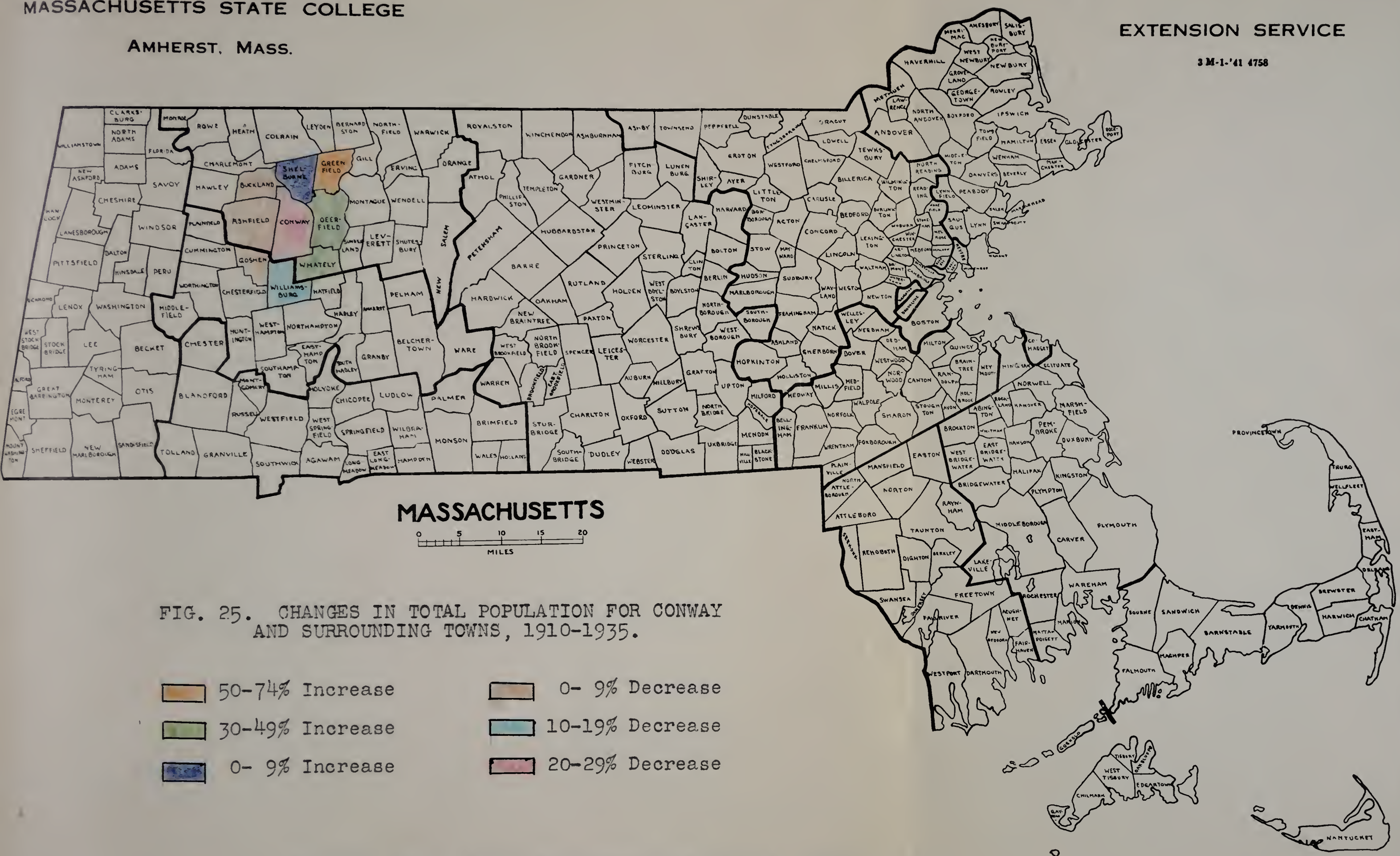
1. Mass. State Planning Board Report, 1936, p. 174.

2. Mass. State Planning Board Report, 1936, p. 174.

3. Conway Town Reports, 1930 to 1947.









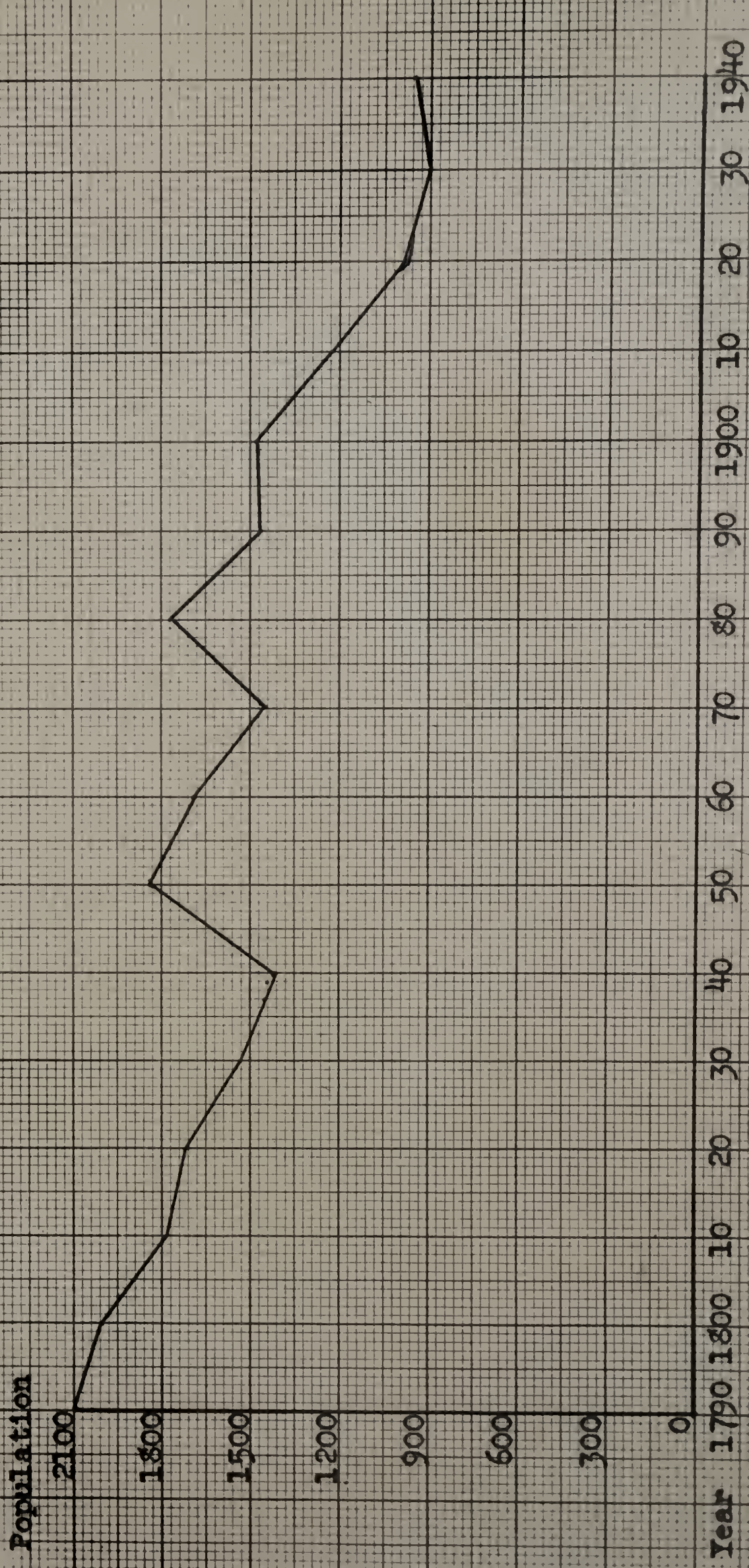
fifty year period between 1790 and 1840 was an era of steady decline in population due to migration of farmers in search of better land.

At the beginning of the industrial era in 1840, the population was 1409, and near the close of that period in 1915 it was 1220. During these years the graph (Fig. 26) shows 2 peaks. The first was due to the influx of Irish in 1850, and the second to French Canadians in 1880. Each flood of immigrants was followed by a depression which was paralleled by a decrease in population. The town never recovered from the 1890 depression. Many factory workers gradually left Conway for larger cities, causing a steady decline in population after 1890. In the twenty year period following 1900, the population dropped 40 per cent. The number of inhabitants in 1915, two years before the DeWolfe Shoe Factory closed, was 1220, and in 1920 it was 961. There was a decrease of 22 per cent in five years which was the greatest decrease in population in any five or ten year period in the history of the town. Since 1920, when the population was 961, there has been a slight downward trend. The Massachusetts Decennial Census for 1945 showed a population of 867.

What is the picture today? The number of people living on farms in 1940 was 448, and the number of non-



FIG. 26. POPULATION OF CONWAY, 1790-1940.



Source: United States Census, 1790-1940.



farm dwellers was 496. The farm population is now a minority in Conway. It is unlikely that the farm population will increase substantially as nearly all of the suitable agricultural land is utilized by the present farm population. It should be noted that many farm inhabitants are really commuters to Greenfield and other towns. There are also commuters who do part time farming. There is danger that the total population may drop considerably when the present housing situation improves.

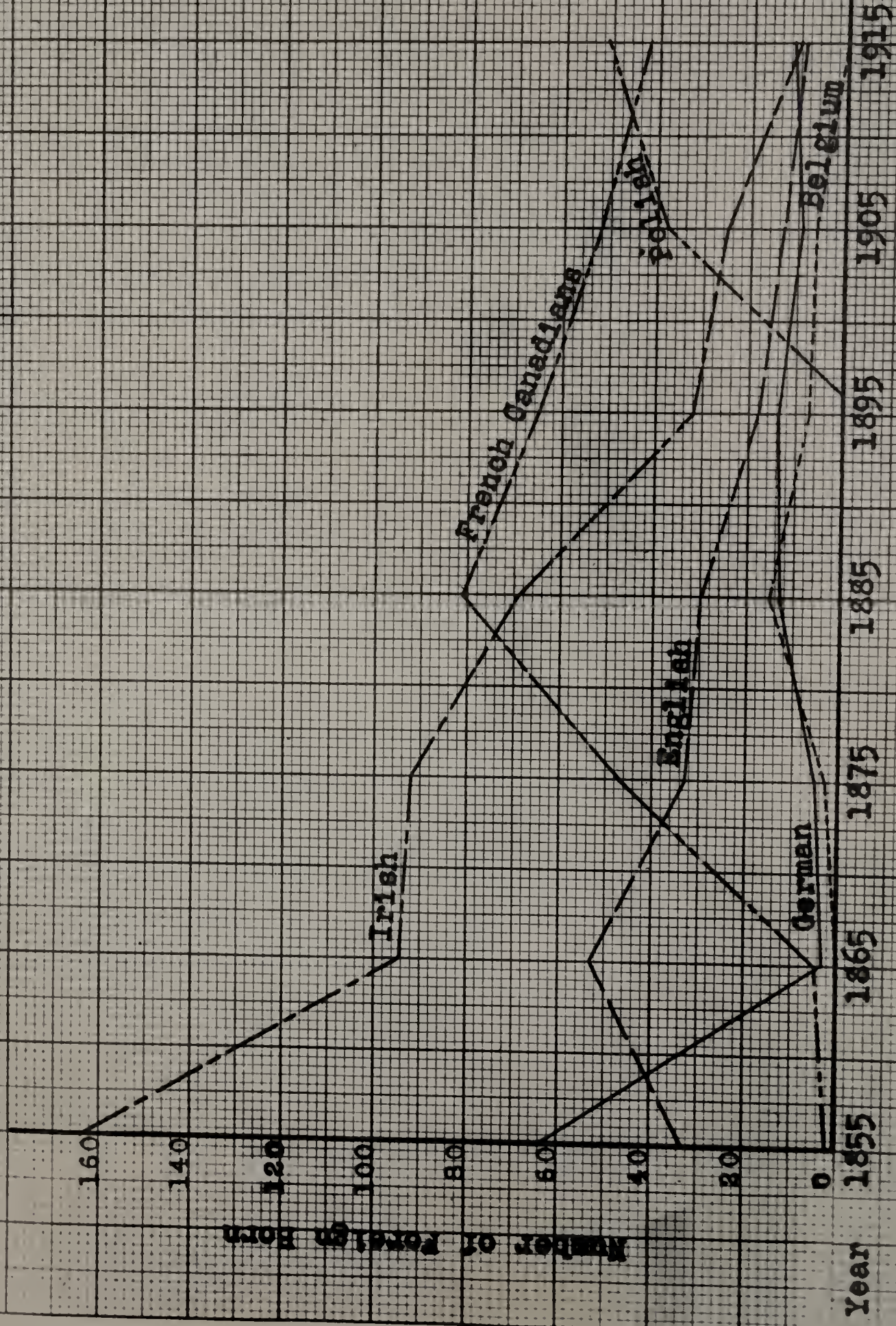
The population may be stabilized by commuters.

#### Nativity.

A detailed study (Fig. 27) of the number of foreign born from 1855 to 1915 is based on the Massachusetts Census (1855 to 1915). This study shows that in 1855 the Irish, German, and English immigrants made up the biggest percentage of foreign born. The number of English foreign born increased up to 1865, while the foreign born Irish population, on the other hand, decreased. The number of German born also fell off sharply and gradually became insignificant after this date. The next influx was of French Canadians who increased rapidly after 1865, and by 1885 had reached their peak of population. The Belgians, although a small group, were strongest in 1885. The



FIG. 27. NUMBER AND NATIVITY OF FOREIGN BORN IN CONWAY, MASS., 1855-1915.



Source: Mass. Census, 1855-1915.



foreign born Polish made their appearance after 1895 and they were still increasing in numbers in 1915. The French-Canadians still were well represented in 1915. Other immigrants, who should receive mention, are the Scotch, French, Italians, and Russians. These waves of foreign born people had a profound effect on the history of the people of Conway.

The majority of the foreign born men were mill hands. After 1900 many foreign born were brought to Conway from eastern Massachusetts by mill owners. The close quarter living of the mill people in company houses resulted in the inter-marriage of racial groups and in some cases social and moral degradation.

Most of the farmers are "Yankees". The "Yankees" or natives descend from Puritan stock who colonized the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Polish immigrants worked as farm hands and eventually acquired their own farms. The present town dwellers therefore have a heterogeneous background.

New laws and the establishment of immigration quotas in 1914 limited immigration. The effect was soon after felt in Conway. The second and third generations were rapidly assimilated. By 1940 there were 879 (93 per cent) native white and only 65 (7 per cent) foreign born



living in Conway<sup>1</sup> (see Fig. 28). As a result of World War II, the picture may change.

#### Age Groups.

Fig. 29 is a sectored circle graph which shows the population and percentile breakdown of eight age groups in 1940. Fourteen and three-tenths per cent of the population is 65 or over. A study made of the towns of Brimfield, Eastham, Egremont, Lancaster, Templeton, and Winchendon,<sup>2</sup> all in Massachusetts, showed an average of 9.65 per cent of the population made up of 65 year olds or older in 1930.

A graph of age groups comparing 1915<sup>3</sup> and 1940<sup>4</sup> is shown in Fig. 30. That ambitious young adults tend to leave a small community with few opportunities for personal betterment is shown in the percentile drop of the 25 to 34 year age group as compared with the 15 to 24 year age group. This is a common trend in many less progressive rural communities. The number of people 45

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1. United States Census, 1940.
  2. A Preliminary Report on Rural Policy, for each of the above towns.
  3. Massachusetts Census, 1915.
  4. United States Census, 1940.

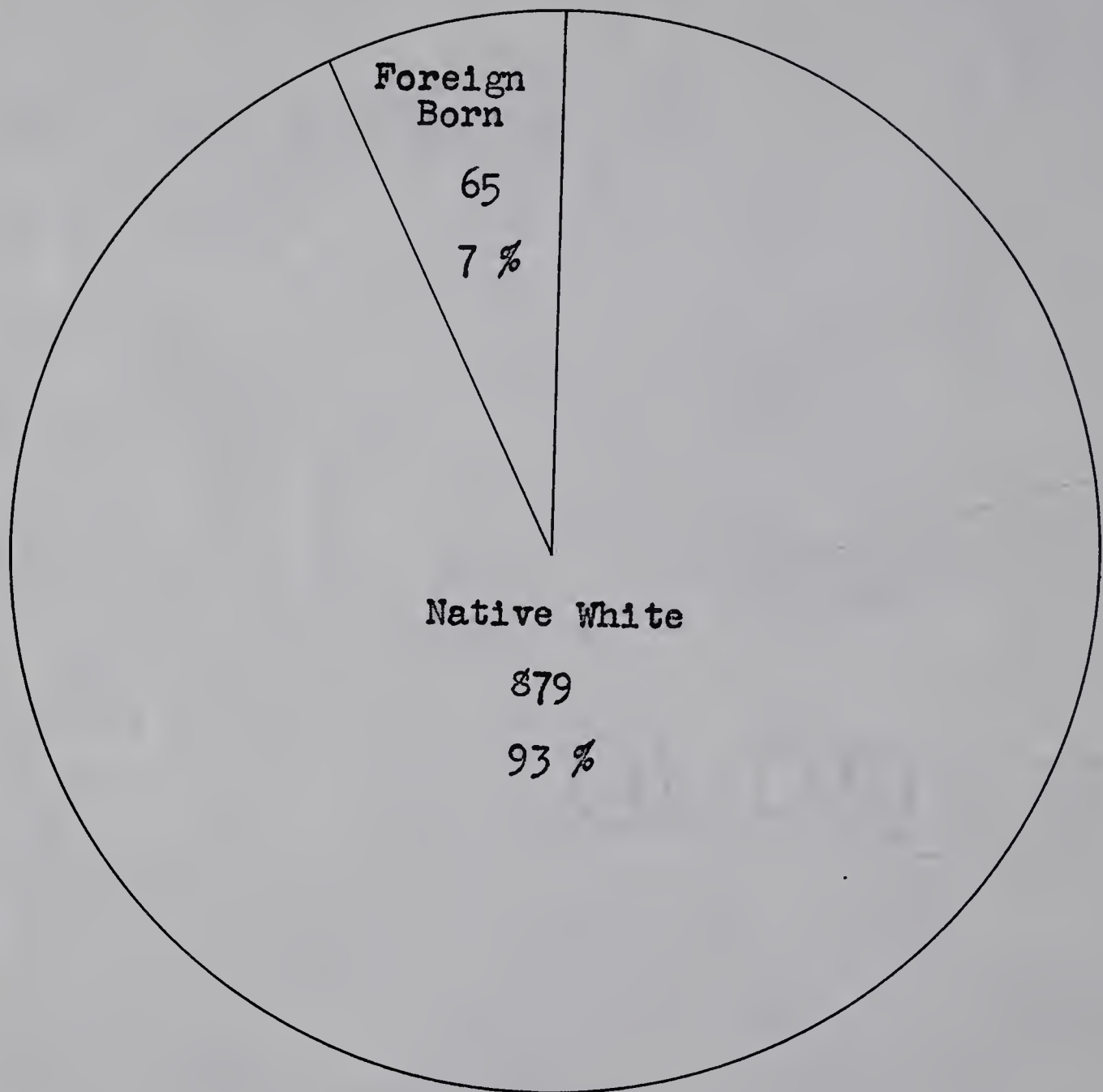


FIG. 28. CHARACTER OF THE POPULATION OF CONWAY, 1940.

Source: U. S. Census, 1940.



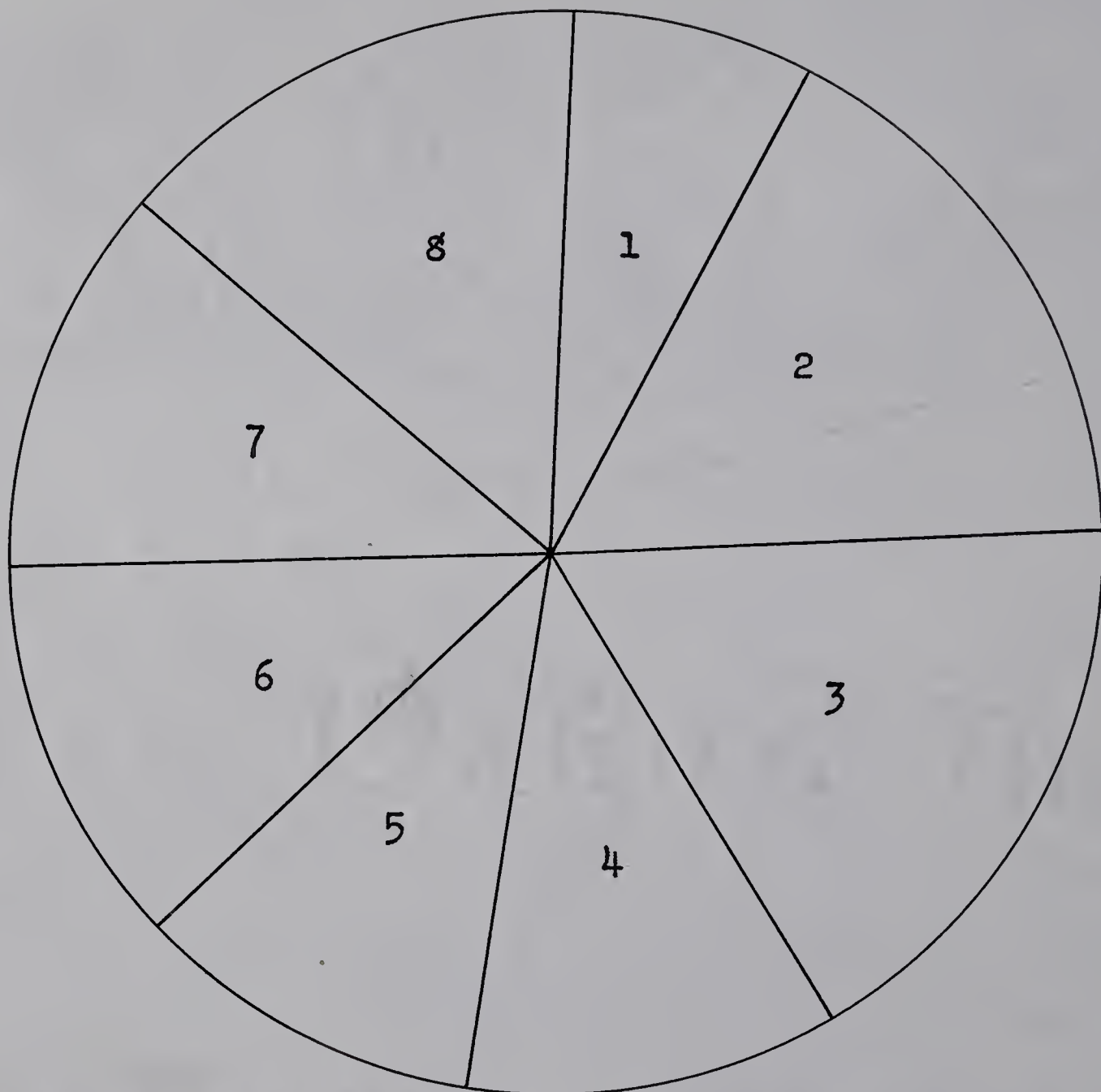


FIG. 29. POPULATION OF AGE GROUPS IN CONWAY, 1940.

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
1.	64	Under 5	6.8
2.	159	5 to 14	16.8
3.	160	15 to 24	17.0
4.	105	25 to 34	11.1
5.	100	35 to 44	10.6
6.	112	45 to 54	11.9
7.	109	55 to 64	11.5
8.	135	65 & over	14.3

Source: U. S. Census, 1940.



FIG. 30. AGE GROUP EXPRESSED IN PER CENT FOR 1915 AND 1940.

Per Cent

20

15

10

5

0

Age Groups  
Under 5

5-14

15-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

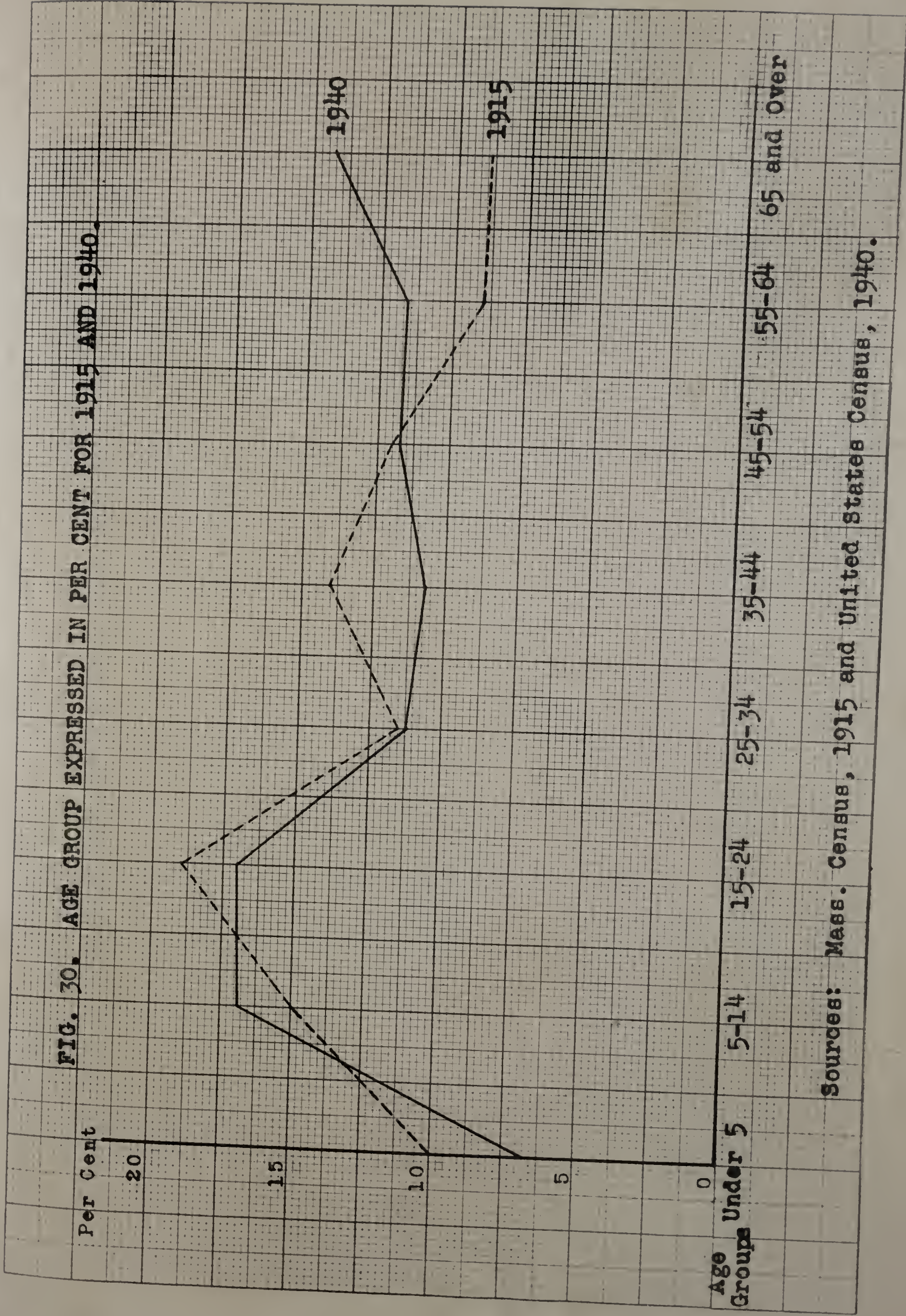
55-64

65 and Over

1940

1915

Sources: Mass. Census, 1915 and United States Census, 1940.





years and older decreased in 1915. In 1940, age groups 45 years and older increased.

Both graphs show an upward trend in the percentage of old people in Conway. In 1940, the 15 to 24 year old age group was the largest single group in that it made up 17 per cent of the total population. Because parenthood is most commonly experienced by the people falling into the 25 to 44 year old age groups, a sudden decrease in these groups as occurred in Conway, according to the United States Census for 1940, will mean a subsequent decrease in the preceding age groups. This is already borne out in the school census and will be discussed more in detail under the subject of schools.

#### Occupations.

In 1940, 47 per cent of the people of Conway lived on 96 farms.<sup>1</sup> During 1934,<sup>2</sup> 33 per cent of the farm operators were part time farmers. They averaged 136 days at occupations other than agriculture. Each year harvest time means an opportunity for part time farm employment for much of the older school population. Some in their

---

1. United States Census, 1940.

2. United States Agricultural Census, 1925 and 1935.

early teens made \$30.00 a week which was a liability instead of an asset. This was particularly true during the war years. However, child labor laws will be more stringent in the future.

The non-farm dwellers, who represented 53 per cent of the population, depended on occupations other than agriculture for their main source of income. Presently 20 people are employed by local manufacturing. Approximately 50 people are at present connected with year-round manufacturing outside of Conway. These people commute to Greenfield, South Deerfield, Shelburne Falls, Shattuckville, and Griswoldville. The bank, garages, saw mills, homes, local stores, and public service occupations account for the largest percentage of local non-agricultural employees.

A chain of stores in western Massachusetts specializes in articles made in rural Vermont hill towns. As a result of the development of local folk arts, small industries have come about. This could also be true in Conway. Much satisfaction and self-expression as well as worthy remuneration may be derived through creative arts.

Except for students attending Smith Vocational School, vocational training has been given little attention in Conway.



The town forest provides many valuable materials such as native ash, which can be used in basket making. The saw mills have slabs and other so-called waste products which might be used in small wood working industries.

An encouraging factor is that a small art colony has already started in Conway and it may develop into a local market for art products.

### Housing.

The number of houses assessed in Conway since 1865 to 1945 has not changed considerably (see Fig. 31). Building of summer homes in Ashfield, which has been brought about by the development of recreational and scenic assets, is responsible for the upward trend portrayed on the graph. It is interesting to note that approximately 1500 people were housed in 274 dwellings in Conway in 1865 as compared with 867 people in 287 dwelling houses in 1945. The number of occupants per dwelling has decreased substantially. This is accounted for by the passing of the mill family together with the decrease in average size of families due to changing social conditions.

The following housing breakdown is adapted from the United States Census for 1940 (see Table III).

Some of these figures have been modified con-



FIG. 31. ASHFIELD AND CONWAY DWELLING HOUSES, 1865-1935.

Dwelling  
Houses

400

350

300

250

200

150

100

50

0

Year

1865

70

75

80

85

90

95

1900

05

10

15

20

25

30

1935

Ashfield

Conway

Source: Franklin County Assessors' Figures from 1865 to 1935.



TABLE III.

## HOUSING IN CONWAY, 1940

	Rural Farm and Rural Non-Farm (Total)	Rural Farm
Occupancy and tenure:		
Total dwelling units	312	114
Owner occupied	192	94
Tenant occupied	66	6
Vacant, for sale or rent	26	4
Vacant, not for sale or rent	28	10
Total occupied	258	100
State of repair of all dwelling units and plumbing equipment:		
Total reporting	297	106
Need major repairs	81	21
No private bath	141	53
No running water in unit	-	14
All dwelling units by toilet facilities:		
Total reporting	-	114
No toilet out or in	-	0
No toilet in structure	-	37
All dwelling units by lighting:		
Total reporting	-	114
No lighting	-	23
All dwelling units by estimated rent:		
Total reporting	198	-
Average monthly rent	\$13.34	-

siderably since World War II. Most of the unoccupied (1940) dwellings are now being used. They have been either purchased outright or rented. Although some houses have been extensively repaired, many still are in bad repair.

In 1940 the standard of living was not all to be desired. Of the farm dwellings, 50 per cent had no private bath, 12 per cent had no running water in the unit, 32 per cent had no indoor toilet, and 20 per cent had no electric lighting.

Summer residents frequently restore run down or abandoned farm houses, or they build a fine summer home. Many of the dwellings in Conway are of colonial architecture, and should be considered as a community asset. Already some are newly painted and well landscaped. A few of the more attractively situated houses have been viewed with the idea of developing private summer residences. This is a noteworthy trend.

Conway has no planning or zoning board. Ninety per cent of the population of Massachusetts live where there are planning boards. Zoning can improve existing housing by establishing minimum standards that all home owners would have to conform to, and in the future it can restrict building other harmful elements such as packing box shacks with corrugated roofs.



Conway is comparable to the town of Hampden in several respects, namely: population, commuters, and out-of-town high schools. In the commuter town of Hampden, Massachusetts<sup>1</sup> (population 1023), three houses that were assessed for \$100, \$200, and \$300 were located along the main highway. The taxes on these tar paper shacks amounted to \$3.80, \$7.60, and \$11.40 respectively. Each family averaged 5 to 7 children in the district and they attended the Springfield elementary and high schools. It cost the town of Hampden \$46.45 for each elementary school pupil, and \$92.48 for each high school pupil. This is a clear cut example of what can happen in Conway.

In 1942, Hampden adopted zoning to insure all of its people against similar social calamities in the future. The establishment of a planning board and zoning in Conway would prove most profitable. The whole community benefits by guarding against a tax burden.

Although the appeal for zoning is usually made from an economic standpoint, zoning laws are worthwhile if they succeed in preserving the beauty of an old New England town for future generations.

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1. Mass. State Planning Board, Western Mass. Issue, Vol. II, No. 8, October, 1938.

Public Health.

Conway has but one practicing physician. The district nurse visits the schools once a week. There is no dentist. The nearest hospital is in Greenfield. Conway is not unlike many rural communities in that it possesses few health facilities and personnel.

Although the people of Conway are fortunate in that they live in a relatively healthy environment, there are still many who are afflicted with ailments due to the lack of good nutrition. Undulant fever, which is usually transmitted through raw milk, constitutes a serious threat and several people have fallen ill from this disease during the past few years.

Like most every community, Conway experienced serious periodic outbreaks of many contagious diseases such as diphtheria and scarlet fever before the advent of modern scientific medicine.

Among the school children, it was found by the school nurse that 98 per cent definitely gained weight in 1945. This is an excellent record. However, it was estimated by the school nurse<sup>1</sup> in the same year that 51 per cent of the school children showed no evidence of

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1. Conway Town Report, 1945. School Nurse's Report, p.66.



having dental defects corrected. An educational program in dental health might well start with the parents. For many years, poor dental health as well as eye defects have been of major concern to the local health authorities. For the past several winters the Parent Teachers Association has sponsored hot lunches for the grammar school children from January 1st to April 1st. These consist of such hot meals as corn chowder or macaroni and beef broth. This is a step in the right direction for better health in Conway.

A Well-Child Clinic has been conducted each summer for many years for the benefit of children who will commence school in the fall.

Public health is seriously endangered in Conway as a result of serious stream pollution. Although no serious industrial pollution occurs in Conway, open sewers and cesspools flow into the South River, Mill River, and lower part of Pumpkin Hollow Brook and thus constitute a serious health threat at all times.

Conway has no public swimming pool. On a hot summer's day, however, some 50 people swim at several places in the highly contaminated South River and a smaller number in the Mill River one-half mile east of the Conway-Deerfield line. The Pumpkin Hollow Brook is a pure mountain stream with constant supply. It is

contaminated by four local sources of domestic waste which could be eliminated by the local Board of Health. Conway must look forward to a modern swimming pool.

Social, Educational, and Recreational Interests.

During the early years in Conway, social interests were centered about the home and church. However, as the town advanced, social, fraternal, educational, and athletic organizations made their appearance and fostered corresponding interests.

Conway at present is a baseball and basketball town as far as athletic interest is concerned. One of the earliest accounts of baseball interest dates back to the Greenfield Gazette and Courier for October 5, 1865. To give an idea of the friendly spirit that existed in baseball, the editor wrote, "The Conway club treated the guests (Northampton Baseball Club) in the best possible style, giving them a splendid supper at the Conway House and sparing no pains to make their visit a pleasant one."

Since then baseball has played an important part in the life of many Conway citizens. John D. "Happy Jack" Chesbro, whose pitching won renown fame for him between 1901 and 1909 spent his off-seasons in Conway. After his professional career ended with the baseball leagues, Chesbro stimulated baseball in Franklin County by managing



teams in Conway, Shelburne Falls, and South Deerfield. In recent years, the Conway Athletic Association has sponsored baseball and basketball teams which have made a very good record.

Although basketball and baseball have always been the principal athletics in Conway, they have not attracted too large a following.

However, there have been other interests than athletics. According to the History of Conway, Arms Grove, which is a natural amphitheatre, was used for the centennial exercises in 1867, and as late as 1915 for the performance of "The Festival of the Hills". The festival was so successful that four performances were presented. Since that time similar productions have not been attempted because of lack of interest and capable leadership. Wildwood Park, which was located on the route of the Conway Electric Road near Lake Wequanock, was the site of innumerable picnics and famous clambakes for many years. The electric road and park were abandoned in 1920.

The loss of large scale manufacturing with its accompanying decrease in population together with the abandonment of the electric road and the park was paralleled by a loss of community spirit and interest. This apathy was also complicated by increasing automotive transportation which tended to disseminate local interest away from

the community.

Fortunately the character of community thinking has begun to change for the better. The development of local interest in the community is recognized in the Conway Youth Center, the newly formed Barber Shop Quartet, the revitalized churches, and a strong 4-H Club. The development of a small art colony and the establishment of Roaring Brook Camp, both movements sponsored by outside people, also serve to demonstrate other possibilities within the town limits.

Just what are some of the other present local interests? In the summer of 1947, the Ladies Aid of the United Church held a very successful hobby show which uncovered local talent. This talent could well be incorporated in the development of a well-rounded community center program. The hobbies which were displayed show a surprisingly wide range and demonstrate many latent skills which augur well for the future. For this reason they are represented in Table IV.

To gain a further understanding of the people of Conway, the author made an interesting survey of 30 families from all walks of life. Although the data obtained (Table V) represents the interests of but a sampling of the total population, it nevertheless indicates a trend that can be used in future community planning for Conway.



TABLE IV.  
HOBBIES OF CONWAY PEOPLE

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Antiques	Leather Craft
Aprons	Knitting
Book Markers	Miniature Furniture
Braided Rugs	Minerals
Coins	Needle Point
Crocheting	Paintings
Dolls	Plaster Models
Finger Painting	Stamps
Floral Settings	Stenciling of Metal
Foreign Perfumes	Swiss Carvings
Hand Craft	Weaving
Heir Looms	Wild Flowers
Lead Soldiers	

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TABLE V.  
SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND RECREATIONAL INTERESTS.

Participation in Social Activities

	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Church	27	60	13
Movies	20	67	13
Parties	6.6	73.3	20
Dances	0	53	47
Grange	0	7	93
Extension	20	27	53
Sports and Athletics	13	63	33
Literary Clubs	6.6	6.6	86.8
Dramatic Clubs	0	6.6	93.4
Hobby Clubs	0	13	87

Educational Activities

	Very much interested	Slightly interested	No interest	No reply
Trips and tours to points of interest	33.3	20	13	33.7
Participating in group discussions of timely topics and modern problems	33.3	33.3	13	20.4
Conservation of wild life	33.3	47	13	
Nature study	27	33.3	20	19.7
Listen to talks by leading citizens	33.3	47	13	.7
How to better understand social courtesies and etiquette	20	33.3	6.6	40.1
How to plan for in- formal social times	20	33.3	13	33.7
How to better appreciate music and art	47	6.6	13	33.4

*from Social Survey*



### Service Activities

	Very much interested	Slightly interested	No interest	No reply
Supply leadership for community clubs	13	6.6	13	67.4
Hobby centers	47	27	13	13
Church activities	60	27	13	0
Parks and recreational areas	60	6.6	6.6	26.8
Younger people's clubs (4-H, Scouts, etc.)	58	20	6.6	15.4
Community achieve- ment day	20	33.3	13	33.7
Community recre- ation programs	53	13	6.6	27.4
Community clean-up campaigns	47	6.6	20	26.4
Community Christmas trees	53	20	6.6	20.4
Community Thanks- giving baskets	20	27	13	40

### Recreational Activities

	Very much interested	Slightly interested	No interest	No reply
Picnics	53	20	6.6	20.4
Hikes	47	13	20	20
Winter sports	33.3	20	20	26.7
Summer sports	60	20	13	3
Social dances	33.3	6.6	27	33.1
Social games and stunts	13	33.3	20	33.7
Singing games and folk games	20	27	20	33
Group singing	53	13	20	14
Informal dramatics	33.3	27	6.6	30.1
Putting on plays	13	27	13	47
Special music - quartette, chorus, orchestra, etc.	27	40	13	20
Music appreciation	40	13	13	34
Team games and athletics	53	13	27	7
Hobbies and handicraft	47	27	6.6	19.4

The survey questions were adapted from a questionnaire prepared by Lawrence V. Loy, Extension Specialist in Community Organization and Recreation at the University of Massachusetts.

Among the social activities, the greatest participation is in church functions and in attending the movies in Greenfield. Seventy-nine and nine-tenths per cent indicated that they go to parties. The greatest reason for going is to play cards. Sixty-six per cent of the people signified that they attend athletic activities but only as spectators. Although there is a great deal of complacency, there is much to be desired in ways of life enrichment.

Participation in educational activities as literary, dramatic, or hobby clubs is negligible. This is probably due to the fact that there are none of these organizations in Conway. Among the educational activities listed in the Table, 47 per cent indicated that they would like to know how to better appreciate music and art. There is definite interest in adult education along these lines. We have already seen that there are potentialities for this sort of recreation and all that is apparently needed is an organized program.

Are Conway folks interested in serving the community? Only 13 per cent indicated very much interest



in supplying leadership for community organizations. Finding leaders is not a new problem in any community, but it still remains as one of the most difficult to solve. Sixty per cent of the people questioned indicated that they were willing to co-operate with other groups in the development of church activities, and parks and recreational areas if they could find time. In actual practice, there have been many cases where "finding time" was an excuse for not cooperating, although frequently it was their own children who were concerned.

When the people were asked what they would like to do in the summer their answers included baseball, tennis, and swimming. The expressed desire for a suitable place to go swimming in Conway was unanimous. At present they have to go to Ashfield, Greenfield, or Northampton for this sport, although it would not take much development to obtain a home-town swimming facility. About one-half of the people indicated they were interested in group singing, hikes, picnics, and team games and athletics.

It is seen that the way folks in Conway think is important. The things they think about - forests, soil, streams, health, sports, hobbies, church, education, and social activities - makes a difference between the Conway of the past and the Conway of the future. Attitude is important but not sufficient. It has to be carried out in action for a community to achieve its goals.

CHAPTER V.

THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF CONWAY.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF CONWAY.

#### Manufacturing Industry.

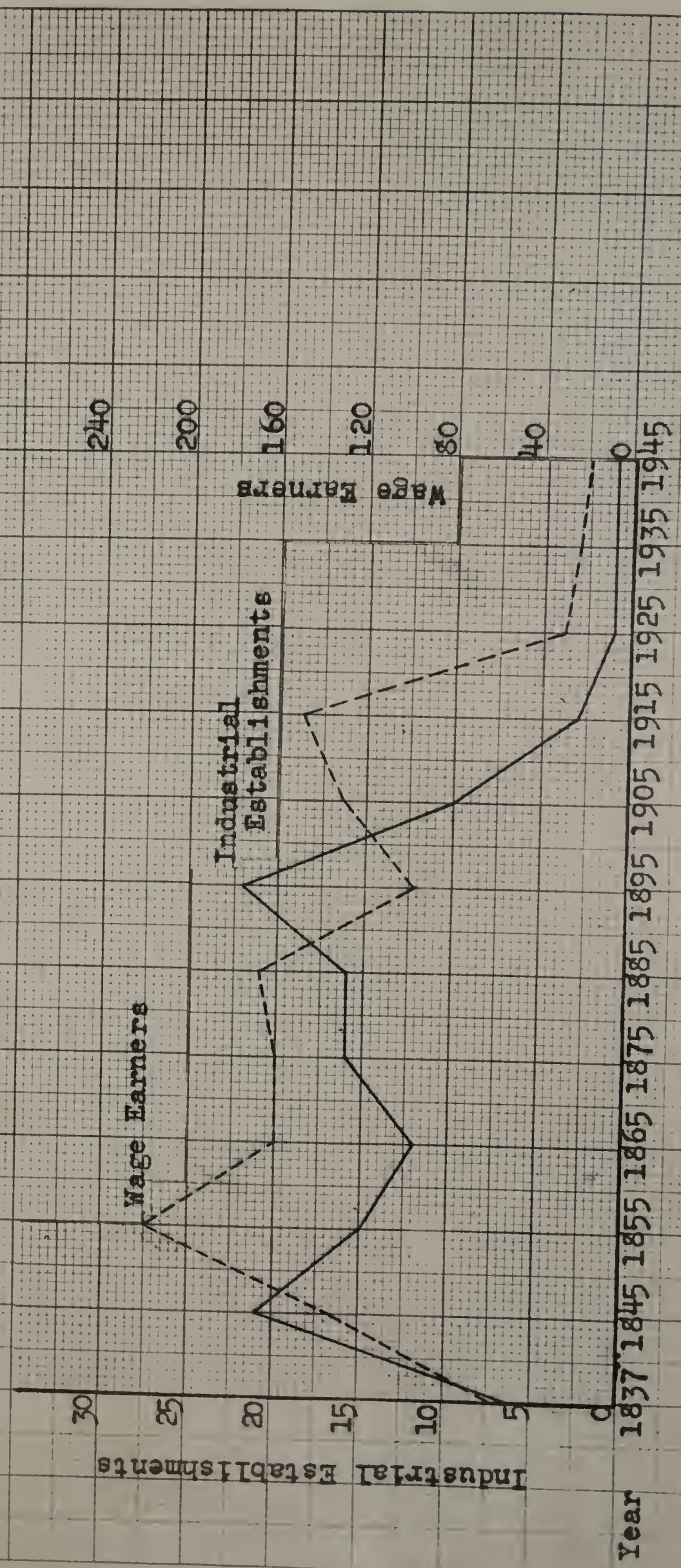
During the larger part of the last century, manufacturing industries have had an important role in the development of this community. Fig. 32 shows the trend in the number of industrial establishments and wage earners. Industrial establishments had two periods of growth, the first reaching its peak in 1845 and the second fifty years later in 1895. Although the number of factories dwindled to 12 during the Civil War, there were 21 in 1845 and 22 in 1895 respectively. There were many diversified industries during these boom years and the products manufactured by them included cutlery, tin-ware, buttons, combs, lumber, wooden products, and leather goods.<sup>1</sup> However, it should be borne in mind that textiles was the chief manufacturing industry of the town from 1840 to 1900. The decline of industry between the two peak years of 1845 and 1895 was due to economic conditions brought on by the depressions of 1857 and 1865 together with the absorption of smaller industries by larger ones. The number of industrial establishments declined sharply

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1. The History of Conway, p. 64.



FIG. 32. TREND IN INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND WAGE EARNERS FOR CONWAY, MASS., 1837-1945



Adapted from Massachusetts Census, 1837-1945, and Federal Census of Manufacturing, 1905.



after 1895 and shortly after the turn of the century, textile manufacturing ceased in Conway. However, economically this was alleviated by a large shoe company which remained in operation from 1896 until 1917. The Conant and Donaldson Company which manufactures taps and dies is still operating.

The number of wage earners compared with the number of industrial establishments does not always correspond. In 1855, when the number of industrial establishments was decreasing, the number of wage earners was increasing and reached its greatest peak with a total of 221 workers. Many smaller industries went out of business and their workers were absorbed by the town's more stable textile industry.

The later decline of the textile industry, which had employed the greatest number of people in Conway for half a century occurred in the decade of 1885-1895. The last effort in manufacturing was brought about by the shoe industry. Wage earners increased from 1895 to 1915. When the town's shoe company abandoned operations in 1917, the number of industrial employees declined rapidly.

The only factory today is The Conant and Donaldson Company which employs twenty people on a forty hour a week basis.

If in the future Conway is to be over 50 per cent forested and under silvicultural management, it would seem that a more appropriate manufacturing would be small wood-using industries as well as "hill crafts".

### Agriculture.

Subsistence farming was carried on by the early farmers who cleared the land and built their homes from virgin timber. The early farms provided the necessities of life such as wheat and corn, vegetables, dairy, poultry and meat products, tree and small fruits, and clothing from carded wool.

The following figures on land tenure are from the United States Agricultural Census for 1935 and 1945. (See Table VI.)

The majority of the farms are fully owned by their occupants. The increase in farm ownership shows a definite trend toward agricultural stabilization in Conway.

The United States Census for 1940 shows 448 farm dwellers (Fig. 33).

The decided trends in crops, which is shown in the following figures, is from the United States Agricultural Census for 1925, 1935, and 1945. (See Table VII.)

The potato crop has shown a steady decline during



TABLE VI.  
LAND TENURE, 1935 AND 1945.

Year	Farms	Full Owners	Per Cent	Part Owners	Per Cent	Man- agers	Per Cent	Ten- ants	Per Cent
1935	96	80	83	15	16	0		1	1
1945	64	57	89	7	11	0		0	

TABLE VII.  
PRODUCTION OF PRINCIPAL CROPS, 1925-1935 AND 1945.

Year	Potatoes (bu.)	Tobacco (lbs.)	Apples (bu.)	All purpose corn (acres)	Hay (acres)
1925	8,998	221,305	16,995	91	2,708
1935	4,865	39,718	2,930	198	2,292
1945	2,095	74,641	166	129	2,283

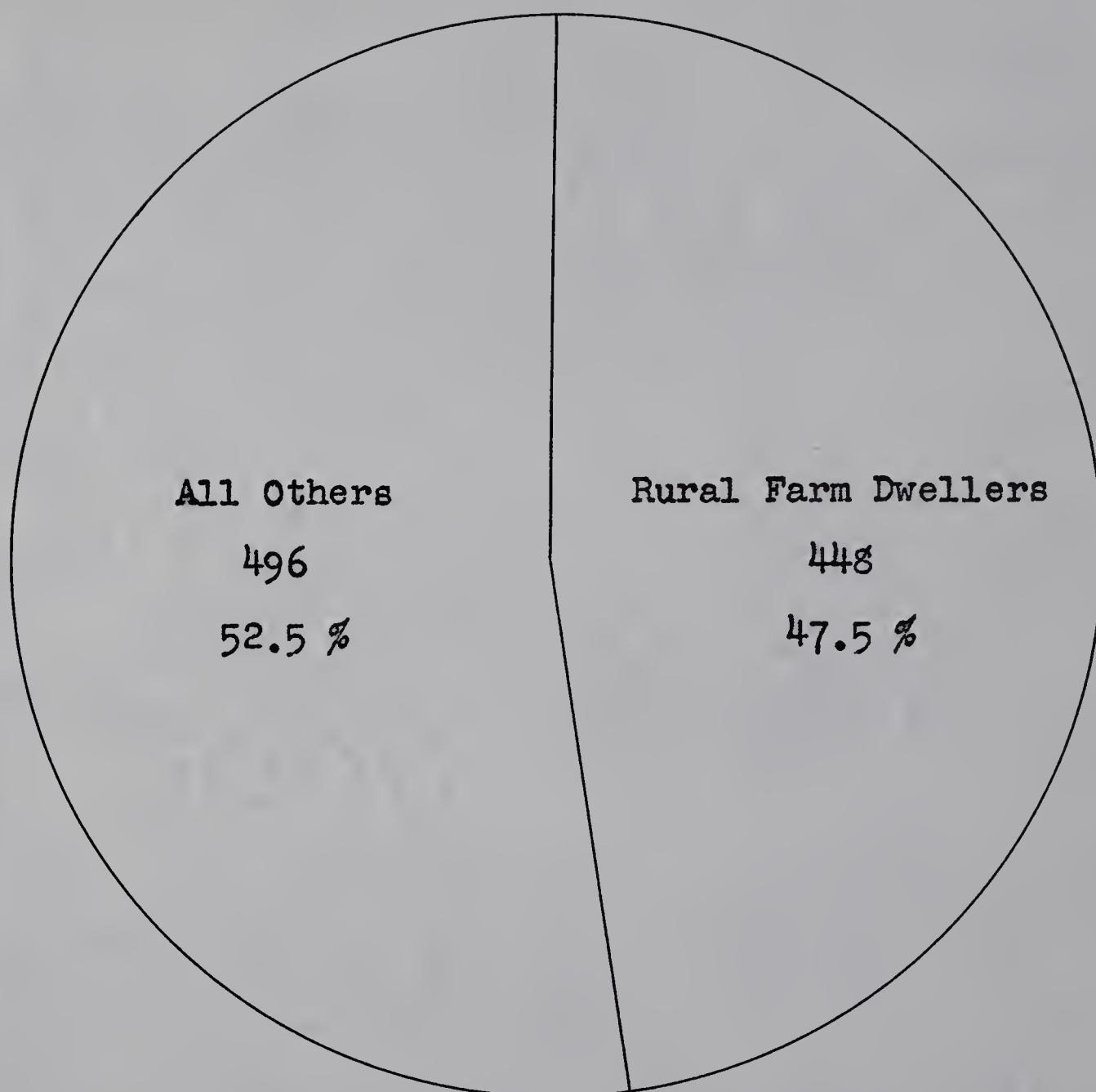


FIG. 33. RURAL FARM DWELLERS IN CONWAY, 1940.

Source: U. S. Census, 1940.



the past twenty years.

Tobacco, which is grown in the lower areas of the town is sold as a cash crop. In 1925, 221,305 lbs. of tobacco was grown. The number of pounds of tobacco grown during the height of the depression in 1935 was 39,718 lbs. Since World War II the price and demand for tobacco has improved. In 1945, 74,611 lbs. was grown, and there has been an increase each year since then.

Apple production is very uncertain due to late frosts in the spring. Such was the case in 1944, 1945, and 1946. Farmers have learned not to depend on apples and many orchards have passed because of neglect.

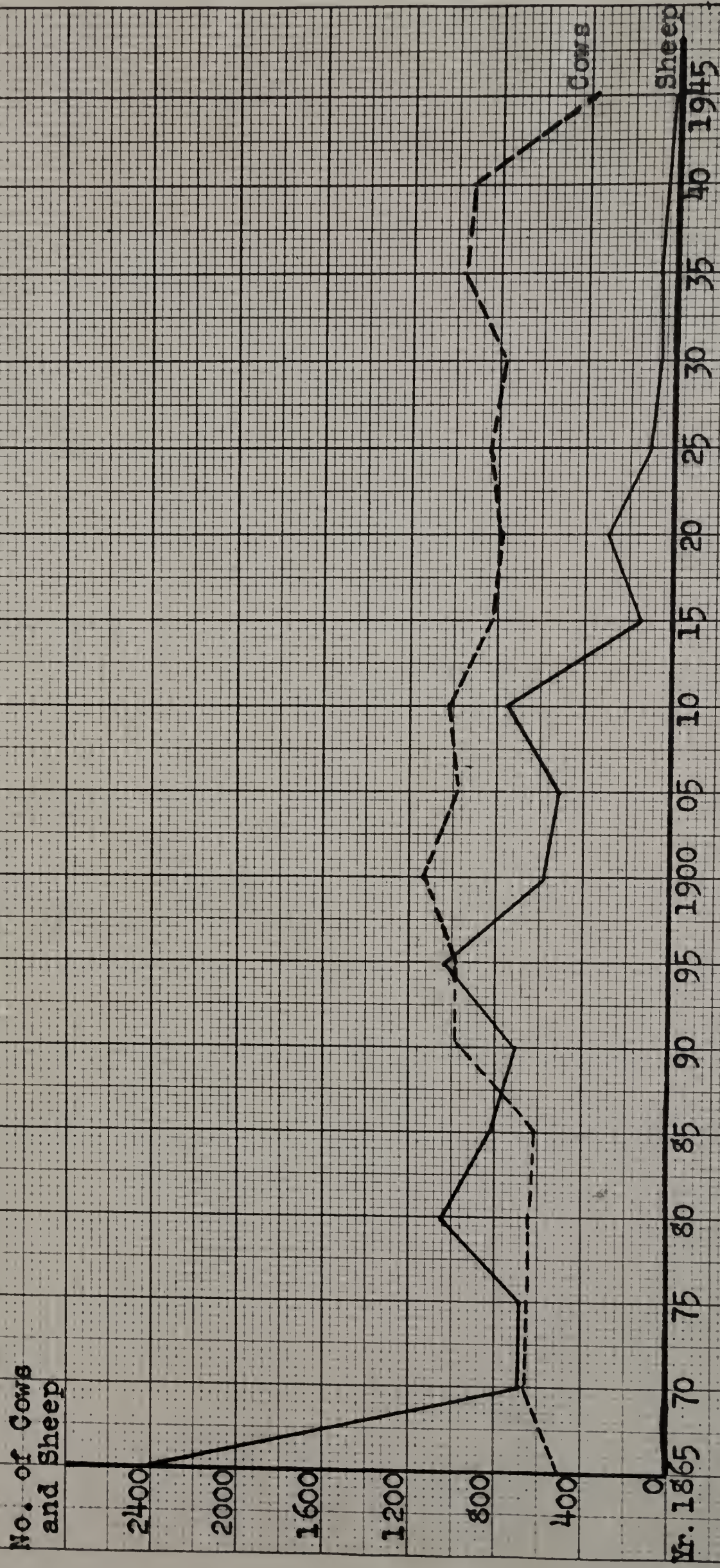
Of the 2,573 acres of cropland harvested in 1945, 2,422 acres were in hay and corn. This will probably maintain itself as long as dairying is important.

Sheep raising is an example of agricultural specialization during the middle of the 19th century. One man brought 3000 sheep from New York State to Conway for grazing and fattening during 1862. In 1865, there were over 2400 sheep in Conway. (See Fig. 34.) Many of the high areas in the eastern part of the town were overgrazed and as a result still are seriously denuded of trees and favorable pasture grass.

As the land became more valuable for dairying,



FIG. 34. NUMBER OF COWS AND SHEEP ASSESSED IN CONWAY, 1865-1945.



Sources: Franklin County Assessors' Figures from 1865 to 1935.  
Conway Town Reports, 1940 and 1945.



sheep raising was given up and more attention was given to dairy farming to help meet the milk needs of the rapidly growing cities. In 1886, the Conway Creamery was established and remained as an important business for 20 years. Much butter was churned here for the Boston market.

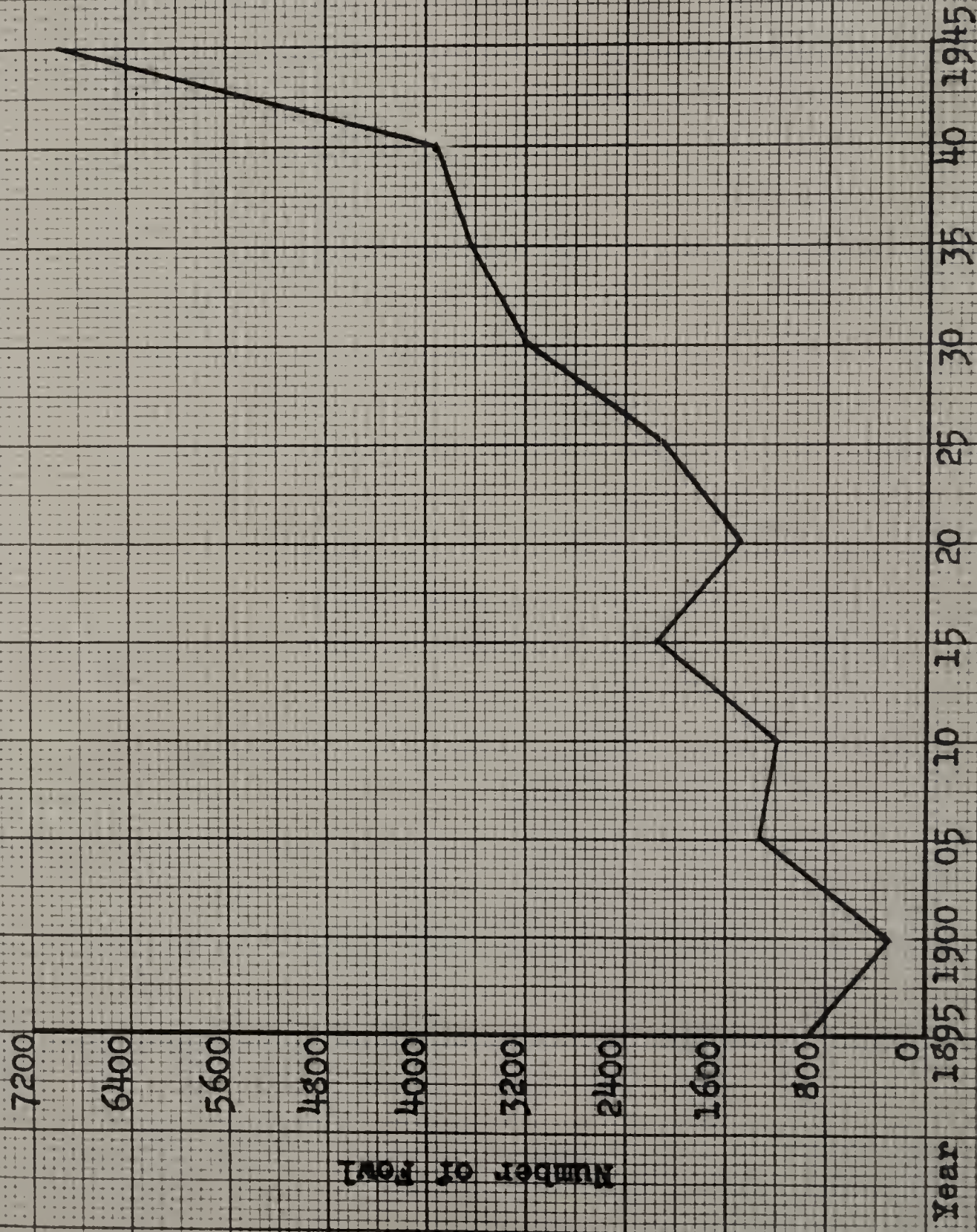
During recent years, the principal farm income has been from specialized dairy farming. Much of the milk is shipped by truck to the Greater Springfield area. The cow population remained fairly constant until 1935, after which it declined sharply (See Fig. 34). Agriculturally, Conway is today a dairy town, and although the trend indicates less dairy farms in the future, they will remain as an important source of milk for the larger cities of the Connecticut Valley.

The stony soil and its drainage is well suited for poultry raising. Poultry farmers and homesteaders are realizing that poultry are a valuable asset as shown by the great increase in number (See Fig. 35). The decline in the past two years is due to the high price of grain, but the industry will probably come back.

In 1945, there were 64 farms occupying 13,014 acres of land which is equal to 203 acres per farm. However, most farms are smaller and few are larger than this figure. Size and acreage is not a reliable estimate of



FIG. 35. NUMBER OF FOWL ASSESSED IN CONWAY\*, 1895-1945.



\*Fowl not reported prior to 1892.

Sources: Franklin County Assessors' Figures from 1865 to 1935.  
Conway Town Reports, 1940 and 1945.



farming operations because attitudes and ownership result in situations where some farmers have an abundance of land and may not utilize it to its best advantage, and where other farmers find that the size of their farms limits them in their operations.

The decline in the number of farms in Conway together with the decrease of land in farms is significant. It has been shown that 59.8 per cent of the land has some suitability for agriculture. In 1945, 57.3 per cent of the total land area was in farms. As these farms are located in areas where the soil has suitability for agriculture, a further decrease is not to be expected if scientific agriculture is practiced. There will probably be an increase in commuters and part time farming.

Agriculture in Conway is practically limited to dairying and poultry raising. The trend is for commuters to have subsistence gardens and raise poultry.

#### Forests.

Today, over 50 per cent of the area in Conway is covered with forests which mean a possible increase of 20 per cent since the peak of agriculture in 1890. It can safely be estimated that another 10 per cent of the land area is woodland pasture which is also becoming forest

land. The forest, a large part of which never should have been removed, is returning to its rightful possession.

The forest cover is dependent on topography. In the western highlands, white birch, yellow birch, beech, and rock maple constitute the characteristic beech-maple climax forest. Originally there were white pine belts, but today they are rather depleted to scattered pockets. There are hemlock stands in shaded ravines. Red spruce is found at the highest elevations in the western third of the town. Red maple, willow, alder, larch and blueberry abound in many swampy places.

It is noteworthy that Conway is a meeting place of trees of three life zones - namely, the Canadian, the Transition, and the Upper Austral zones. Therefore it offers excellent resources for tree study and botany.

Forest cover of the lower areas includes white, red, and black oak and elm. Some chestnut oak, blighted chestnut, sassafrass, ash, and sycamore are representatives of trees that have an extensive southern range.

Pasture lands that are reverting to forests have prolific growths of steeple bush, ground juniper, sweet fern, sumac, red cedar, gray birch, pitch pine, and red maple. Whereas the forests are a habitat for deer and foxes, this variation is suitable for wild life such



as pheasants and rabbits.

Fortunately, serious forest fires have not plagued the forests of Conway. This does not mean that there should not be precautions. However, the Conway forests, like most of the Massachusetts forests, have been seriously exploited by continuous clear cutting rather than the more accepted methods of forest management. This results in little sustained economic yield from the land. Generally, the farmer allows the portable mill operator or stumpage buyers to set up a mill and cut what he desires without any concern about proper cutting practices and future forest yield. Slash is left as a fire hazard and seed trees are unknown. It should be insisted upon that the free services of the State Conservation Department be employed in future operations. This is a state law, as well as of nature, which no longer can be ignored.

Dr. George A. Garratt, Dean, Yale School of Forestry is accepted as an eminent authority in Forest Economics. He pointed out in a talk delivered before the Massachusetts Forest and Park Association on January 29, 1948, entitled "Where are We Going in the Next Fifty Years?", that as a result of such forest practices throughout the state, that the state's wood using industries, which utilize between 600-700 million board feet of lumber

annually, receive about 100 million board feet or 15 per cent from Massachusetts forests in spite of unprecedented market demands.

Dr. Garratt also pointed out that many less desirable species such as red maple and gray birch are coming in as a result of "creaming" or "high-grading" forest areas which aims at removing suitable trees of better species, and leaving inferior and over mature trees and "wolf" pines.

The following highly significant statement by Kernan in American Forests, August, 1946 is pointed out by Dr. Garratt in relation to the forest problem in Massachusetts. "The fact remains that no compelling economic reason can be found for growing wood. Lands are held for a variety of reasons, but forestry is seldom one of them . . . While logging has dwindled, recreation has jumped to the foreground as a major industry and has given new aim to the conservation program."

Multiple use of forests not only includes lumbering and recreation, but also water shed protection and wild-life. Conservation, grazing, and soil are closely related. There is no conflict between forest management for wood, and management which includes fur, fish, fun and other products.

In his talk, Dr. Garratt used the following



statement from the Higgins Lake Conference to stress the importance of multiple use of forests. "The multiple uses of forests other than for production of wood are so essential to our national economy and American standard of living that, even though there might develop in the future certain substitutes for wood, the expansion of forested areas and intensification of forest management would still be wholly justified."

At present there are two publicly owned forests within the township of Conway. One is the Conway State Forest (Fig. 36), which remains undeveloped for recreation, but is a potential source of lumber for the state, and at present serves for the propagation of wild life through adequate forest protection. There are 1749 acres in this forest. Open areas have been reforested with spruce and pine. Because much of the forest lies within the Northampton and Deerfield watersheds, its development as a recreational area cannot be expected.

In January 1946, there were 127 town forests in Massachusetts holding 39,218 acres on which more than 8,000,000 trees have been planted.<sup>1</sup>









Many of the town forests are already paying

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1. The Russell Town Forest - A Forest Management Plan. Mass. Forest and Park Association, Bul. 170, January 1946, p. 8.

FIG. 36. PUBLIC AREAS.

Legend:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Activity or Use</u>
	Conway State Forest	Forest Reserve. Proposed Wild Life Refuge.
	Proposed Lake Wequanock- Mill River State Forest	Wayside Picnic Area, Water Sports, Hunting and Fishing, Horse Back Riding, Nature Trails, and Trailside Museum.
	Conway Town Forest	Hunting, Hiking. Proposed Forestry and Forest Management Demonstration Purposes.
	Conway Town Forest, Proposed Extension	Wintersports Area, Camping, Picnicking, Nature Trails, Horse- back Riding.
	Field Hill (Proposed)	Hiking, Observation Tower, "Best View in Town".
	Town Playfield	Baseball, Softball, Tennis, Volley Ball, and Basketball on out- side Courts, Children's Playground. Proposed Swimming Pool and Picnic Area.
	Northampton Water Shed	No Tresspassing.
	South Deerfield Water Shed	Fishing, Hunting, No Swimming.



FRANKLIN CO.

BUCKLAND

S H E L B U R N E

ROWE LOT HILL

ARTHUR SEAT

~~Bandwell Ferry~~



A simple line drawing of a river, labeled "SOUTH RIVER". The river is depicted with two parallel lines representing the banks, and a dashed line in the center representing the water flow. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right.

C O N W A Y

Burkville

Conway

CRICKET HILL

FIELD HICK

NORTON HILL

ROARING BRO

POPAL  
HILL

MT. ESTHER

W H A T E L Y

FRANKLIN CO.  
HAMPSHIRE CO.

WILLIAMSBURG

MASS. DEPT. OF CONSERVATION 1932



off. In 1939, the North Adams Town Forest showed a profit of \$1,879 from 6720 acres. It is conservatively estimated that within the next three decades as of 1940, the Westfield Town Forest of 5,701 acres will show a net profit of \$20,000 annually.<sup>1</sup> Many of the smaller forests of only a few hundred acres which have been under management have shown a sizable financial return.

The small town of Russell is similar to Conway in topography and submarginal land. The town accepted the Town Forest Act in 1923. It systematically acquired land until over 3,000 acres are now town-owned. Over 300,000 trees were set out. A trained forester is now employed to take full charge of the forest management. The gross income of the forest in 1945 was \$1,150. This figure is not more than a tenth of the possible maximum return when the forest is fully developed. The forest is already self supporting.<sup>2</sup>

The Conway Town Forest was established more than 15 years ago when the town farm land was converted into the Conway Town Forest. There are 160 acres in this tract, which is located north of the Conway State Forest (Fig. 36).

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1. The First Quarter Century of the Town Forests in Massachusetts. Mass. Forest and Park Association, Bul. 163, October 1939, pp. 3-4.
  2. The Russell Town Forest - A Forest Management Plan. Bul. 170, January 1946, pp. 3-6.



Forty-five thousand five hundred pine were set out in the open areas that were previously fields. The wooded area of the forest has remained undeveloped, and in 1944 much clear cutting was done for lumber purposes. So far nothing has been done in the way of forest management so that a maximum year to year permanent yield can be expected as in the town of Russell.

It is of vital importance that the people of Conway investigate the economic and esthetic advantages of a managed town forest for Conway. If the Conway Town Forest is managed and systematically enlarged, it can be a valuable asset to the town in that it will offer greater economic stability by the reduction of taxes through the sale of forest products, by some local employment in the forest, and by guaranteeing future local wood industries a continuous supply of quality lumber.

To the north of the present undeveloped Town Forest there is a great deal of abandoned upland that could be absorbed and used for forestry and recreation. A number of abandoned roads can serve as foot, ski, and bridle trails. The proposed ski area, (Fig. 6), is in this vicinity. The forest may serve as an outdoor meeting place for such civic organizations as 4-H clubs, the Youth Center, and Boy Scouts, where outdoor education can be taught and practiced.

Commercial Recreation.

Conway is one of Franklin County's most beautiful towns. One cannot help but being aware of its splendor at every season. There are snow clad hills in the winter, foaming white streams and delicate green foliage in the spring, and winding back roads for summer jaunts. Fall foliage is brilliant. In all seasons there can be found total relaxation in peaceful wooded retreats. Conway is playland all year around.

Although Conway has a rich and colorful background which may serve as an incentive for the tourist and traveler to stop in Conway, there are at present no facilities for over night tourists, such as hotels (Conway Inn burned January 18, 1948), cabins, and tourist homes. If there is to be a future development of the town, facilities of this type can play an important role.

Conway has many assets to attract tourists. One of the few remaining covered bridges in Franklin County is in Conway. The Conway Academy and Pumpkin Hollow district school buildings, although in a bad state of repair, are of much historical interest. It is not too late to salvage them.

Many noted leaders are associated with Conway. Marshall Field was born on Field Hill and as a boy resided



there. Many years later in Chicago he founded the Marshall Field Company and became a multi-millionaire. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Field Columbian Museum (1893) in Chicago (now the Field Museum of Natural History). In 1900 he gave the Field Memorial Library to Conway.

Another prominent native son was William C. Whitney. He became Secretary of the Navy in the Cabinet of President Cleveland.

Other well known people who lived in Conway for a time include Dr. Edward Hitchcock, who was Pastor of the Conway Congregational Church and later became president of Amherst College.

Mary Lyon taught a select school in Conway. Later she founded Mt. Holyoke Seminary, which became Mt. Holyoke College.

Conway's historical background, together with its year-round scenic beauty is the community's most valuable asset. Therefore plans should be made to develop these assets to the best advantage and to let the traveling public know about them. All of these should attract the tourist, sportsman, skier, nature enthusiast, and historian.

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIAL FACILITIES OF CONWAY.



## CHAPTER VI.

### SOCIAL FACILITIES OF CONWAY.

#### The Schools.

The first public school house was built in 1773. In 1787 it was necessary to build more public schools to cope with the increasing population. By 1800, 16 district school houses were in use in the populated centers throughout the town.

The centralized Burkeville Grammar School, which has 4 class rooms, was erected in 1902. It gradually absorbed the pupils from the district schools so that now it is the only functioning school in the town. Of the 16 district schools, the Broomshire, South Part, Shirkshire and Poland Schools were the last to be abandoned. Pupils are now transported from the outlying districts by school buses to the Burkeville Grammar School.

The Conway Academy, which preceded the high school, was established in 1853. In 1886, the academy was changed to a public high school.<sup>1</sup> It continued in this capacity until 1927 when it was closed because of increasing school expenses. Since then, pupils have been transported to the nearest high school. The distribution of

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1. The History of Conway, pp. 158-168.

Conway pupils in neighboring high schools between 1937 and 1947 is shown in Table VIII.<sup>1</sup> The majority go to Arms Academy at Shelburne Falls, and to South Deerfield High School. A very small number go to Sanderson Academy at Ashfield, and to Williamsburg High School. Some students who show exceptional ability in the vocational arts attend Smith Vocational School in Northampton. Although the table shows that on the average 3.5 pupils attend Smith Vocational School yearly, during the years 1943-1947 no one took advantage of the opportunity. This is rather disturbing and the reason is not apparent.

Because of the distribution of high school students, there has existed a lack of unity amongst youth (12-18 years) for many years. As most students have to make a definite school bus, participation in after school extra curricular activities is impossible in most cases. A major aim of the Conway Youth Center is to unify the youth of the community by bringing them together, and to offer a program that will allow for activities that the students miss in their respective schools.

There is a great scarcity of recreational

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1. Conway Town Reports, 1937 to 1947. Reports of the Superintendant of Schools.



TABLE VIII.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONWAY HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS, 1937-1947.

Year	Arms Academy at Shelburne Falls	South Deerfield High School	Sanderson Academy at Ashfield	Smith Vocational School at Northampton	Williams- burg High School
1937	24	22	1	9	2
1938	26	20	0	4	3
1939	27	23	1	8	0
1940	26	20	2	8	2
1941	26	16	2	5	1
1942	30	14	2	1	1
1943	26	14	1	0	0
1944	22	11	1	0	1
1945	23	13	1	0	1
1946	24	21	0	0	1
1947	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	277	196	11	35	14

facilities and equipment at the Burkeville Grammar School. Partly because of this unfortunate condition, many pupils have failed to learn the true meaning of play, and unsportsman-like attitudes, such as "bullying", have prevailed in the school yard. It was, therefore, necessary to spend much time in teaching the importance of fair play to grammar school youngsters who belong to the Conway Youth Center.

For many years there has been a decrease in elementary school registration. A decrease can occur when there is a marked decline in the age groups embracing the young adults. This has been the case in Conway. Table IX portrays the elementary school registration trend which is adapted from the Superintendent of Schools Reports from 1930 to 1947. Although the school population has steadily gone down, the cost of education has mounted.

It is significant to note that only 42 per cent of the grammar school graduates complete their high school course. This figure is based on a survey of graduates from each school between 1930 and 1947. It must be taken into consideration that some youngsters move away from town after they have completed the elementary grades and continue their education elsewhere, but the greatest



TABLE IX.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FROM 1930 TO 1947.

Year	Registration	Year	Registration
1930	163	1939	131
1931	172	1940	128
1932	164	1941	147
1933	170	1942	144
1934	172	1943	139
1935	160	1944	121
1936	147	1945	115
1937	145	1946	110
1938	132	1947	107

school mortality occurs when students are legally old enough to leave school (16 years) and seek employment to help the family income, or due to early physical maturity and a misleading "grown up" attitude.

Of the high school graduates during recent years, approximately one-half continued their education by taking short courses in specialized fields such as beauty culture, practical nursing, business and trade which eventually led to employment outside of Conway. Less than 5 per cent of the high school graduates went on to a 4 year college education. None returned to their home community as there was no opportunity to carry on their chosen profession. The greatest number of late teen age youth (17-20) who remain in Conway do not have a complete high school education. The school situation almost demands a youth program that will provide opportunities that are now lacking. The Youth Center was originated to meet this situation.

#### Libraries.

In 1821, the Conway Social Library was formed. The books were kept in the house of John Howland at Pumpkin Hollow. Although there were few books, some of the best histories, sketches of travel, and biographies



of that time were included. The library with its 800 volumes was moved in 1870 to the town office which was located in the Conway Bank Building. A disastrous fire in January 1878 destroyed the library and its contents. The proprietors of this library then voted to give the remaining 100 books, that survived the fire, to the town. This was the occasion for the establishment of a Town Library (March 4, 1878). It was opened on November 15, 1878. For many years the town contributed its "un-expended dog tax" towards its support. There were 710 volumes in the library by 1878 and in November 1901 there were 2,800 volumes.

One of the greatest benefactors of Conway was Marshall Field. A native of Conway, he went to Chicago where he established the Marshall Field Company. There he became one of America's richest men. His love for his native town never ceased. He gave a large sum of money for the establishment and endowment of a library in memory of his mother and father. At a Fourth of July celebration in 1900, the corner stone was laid. On July 13, 1901 it was dedicated.

The building is distinctly monumental which features classic Greek architecture.

The 2,800 volumes of the Town Library were turned

over to the Trustees of the Field Memorial Library in November 1901. Three hundred volumes were kept by the newly dedicated library and the remaining 2,500 volumes were evenly distributed in the towns of Hawley, Heath, and Leverett, which at that time did not have a library. When the library was opened there were 6,000 carefully selected volumes upon the shelves.<sup>1</sup>

During recent years the library activities have slowed down. The librarian estimates that about 140 books, including donations, are being added to the stacks each year. The town makes no appropriation and the Trustees spend less than \$55.00 per year for new books. The 15-20 magazines are made available to the public.

There is a lack of interest in the library, especially by the younger members of the town. Merely books on shelves will no longer suffice. Its "Victorian Atmosphere" will need to give way to planned activities and a visual aid program. There is a large empty basement room that can be put to use such as for a nursery room for little tots.

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1. The History of Conway, pp. 171-201.



Transportation and Roads.

From 1895 to 1920 the Conway Electric Road carried passengers to the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad and to the Boston and Maine railroad. These railroads followed the Deerfield River to the larger cities. Today there is no railroad service for Conway. The only way to get to or from Conway is by automobile.

Automobile travel has significance. Figures from the Department of Public Works Traffic Flow Map of Conway for 1936 gives us an idea of the yearly average amount of traffic (motor vehicles) that pass into Conway on the important connecting roads during a 24 hour period. (See Table X.)

The figures in Table X indicate the average traffic flow into Conway via State Route 116 (Sunset Trail) from Ashfield and from South Deerfield during the 4 seasons of the year.

The decided increase during the summer and fall is a result of pleasure drivers who supposedly seek the cool hill country and its scenic beauty. The traffic flow is undoubtedly heavier now than it was in 1936 and it can be expected to increase in the years to come. Tourists and pleasure drivers can be likened to a cash

TABLE X.  
TRAFFIC FLOW INTO CONWAY, 1936.

	Average Traffic Flow from Ashfield to Conway per day	Average Traffic Flow from South Deerfield to Conway per day
Spring	226.20	342.78
Summer	332.80	504.32
Fall	304.20	460.98
Winter	176.80	267.92
Mean	260	394

crop in that they can be cultivated (as friends) and bring an additional income to Conway.




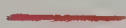
Twenty miles of back roads have been abandoned. These may have several uses such as fire lanes, bridle trails, hiking paths, and winter sports. These potential recreation lanes are shown in Fig. 37.

The 71 miles of maintained road are of three kinds - macadam, black surfaced, and gravel. State Route 116 is a macadam highway. Most of the connecting roads have been black surfaced or are in the process of being surfaced. Gravel roads are suitable for travel during most of the year. All these roads are kept open by truck and tractor plows in the winter time.

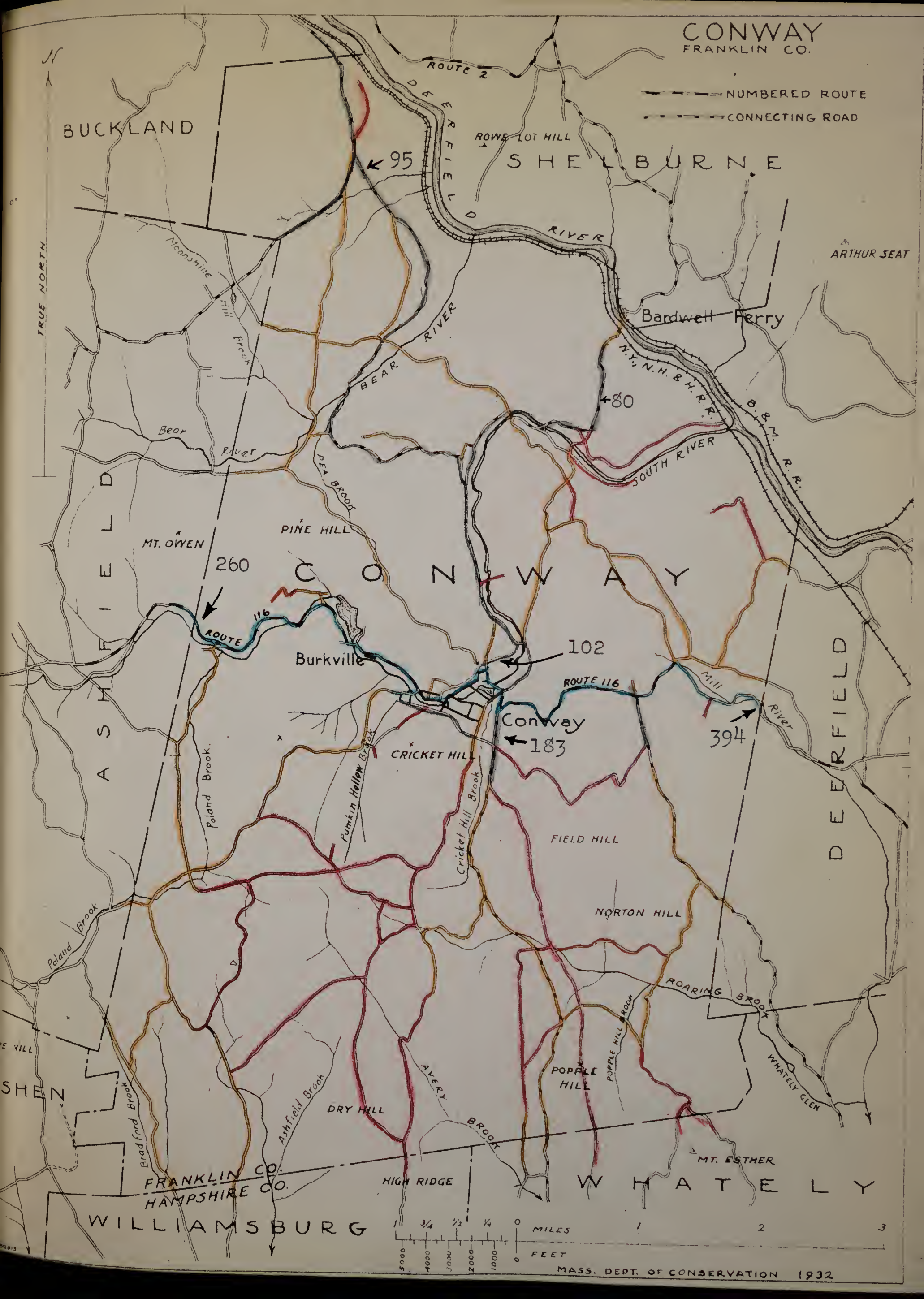


FIG. 37. THE PRESENT ROADS OF CONWAY, AND TRAFFIC  
FLOW INTO CONWAY AS DETERMINED IN 1936.

Legend:

	Macadam Highway
	Black Topped or Surfaced Roads
	Gravel Roads
	Abandoned Roads

--- NUMBERED ROUTE  
--- CONNECTING ROAD



TRUE NORTH

BUCKLAND

SHELBURNE

ARTHUR SEAT

Bardwell Ferry

MT. OWEN

PINE HILL

Burkville

Conway

CRICKET HILL

FIELD HILL

NORTON HILL

POPPLE HILL

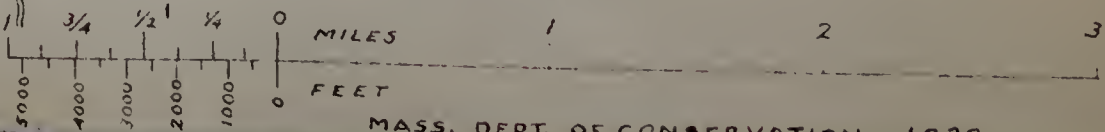
MT. ESTHER

FRANKLIN CO.  
HAMPSHIRE CO.

WILLIAMSBURG

HIGH RIDGE

WHATELY





Community Organizations  
and Meeting Places.

During the past century there have been many community organizations in Conway. Some failed because of lack of interest or poor leadership, or because of conflict between members. Other organizations have functioned for many years and still retain their strength and dignity. Among the older organizations that play an important part in community life is the Morning Sun Lodge of Masons, the Eastern Star, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Fireman's Association, the Conway Sportsmen's Club, the Conway Athletic Association, the United Protestant Church, St. Mark's Catholic Church, and the Parent-Teachers Association. Relatively new organizations include the Conway Youth Center, the Conway Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, and a 4-H Club which was organized in March, 1948.

The Broomshire Sewing Club is a small social club with membership from farm families in the Broomshire District.

Conway's community organizations are presented in detail in Table XI.

From this table it is apparent that Conway has

TABLE XI.

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS OF CONWAY, 1947.

Organization	Total Member- ship	Sex	Age Groups	Activities
<u>Churches</u>				
St. Mark's Catholic Church	90	Both	All ages	Religious
Women's Group	40	Women	20 and over	Religious, Social, and Charitable
United Church	150	Both	All ages	Religious
Ladies Aid	100	Women	21 and up	Religious, Social, and Charitable
Christian Endeavor	30	Both	10 to 20	Religious, Educational, and Social
<u>Fraternal Organizations</u>				
Morning Star Lodge of Masons	125	Male	21 and up	Fraternal, Social, Charitable, and Educational
Eastern Star	40	Female	18 and up	Social and Charitable
Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quar- tet Singing in America	25	Male	18 and up	Fraternal, Social, and Charitable
Fireman's Relief Association	35	Male	21 and up	Benefit for Firemen. Social

*glue next sheet here*



### Recreational Organizations

Conway Sportsmen's Club	100	Male	18 and up	Hunting and Fishing. Stocking of Fish and Game
Conway Athletic Association	20	Male	18 to 40	Basketball and Baseball
Conway Youth Center	70	Both	7 to 21	Recreational and Educational

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### Educational Organizations

Parent-Teachers Association	35	Both	21 and up	Educational and Social
4-H Club	35	Girls	8 to 18	Educational and Social

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### Patriotic Organizations

Farrar-Manning Post Veterans of Foreign Wars	30	Males	21 and up	Civic and Patriotic
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### Social Organizations

Broomshire Sewing Club	12 Families	Both	All Ages	Social and Recreational
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a representative number of community organizations which embrace all age groups. The greatest problem which is now confronting many organizations is how to regain genuine interest and leadership and how to coordinate their efforts. New ideas, or a trend away from the routine line of thinking is too frequently met with cold defeatism. Already such important community organizations as the Youth Hostel, the Boy and Girl Scouts, and the Grange have slipped silently away.

To ameliorate this situation leadership training has been under way at the Conway Youth Center for over 2 years. As a result, Conway youth are beginning to share in much of the planning and exercising of their own program. The progress attained is an indication of what local leadership and cooperation can do. It is a demonstration of the kind of planning that the members of the community must extend in several directions.

The best available indoor meeting place is the Town Hall. The facilities of the hall were greatly improved in 1947. It is the only building which can handle a crowd of more than 150 people. The upstairs hall is used as an auditorium and gymnasium. There is a small stage which has been used for many dramatic productions. On the first floor are to be found the



Youth Center room, the Veterans room, the kitchen, wash rooms, and town offices. The shower room and heating plant is located in the basement. In the undeveloped part of the basement there is room for such facilities as bowling alleys. The Town Hall has gradually been improved to serve as a community center.

Other meeting places which serve the community are the Masonic Hall, which has a small banquet hall and assembly room, the Burkeville Grammar School, the churches, and private homes.

#### Town Finance.

The total valuation of personal property and buildings has shown a steady upward trend since 1895. However, the value of land has dropped since 1930, when it was worth \$346,000, to its present value of \$320,000.<sup>1</sup> The value of land is decreasing because of the changes in land use together with the depletion of merchantable timber stands.

A study of the tax rate based on the Franklin County Assessor's Figures by Towns from 1865 to 1935, together with the Conway Assessor's Figures for 1940 and

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1. Conway Town Reports for 1930 and 1947. Treasurer's Reports.

1945, show an upward trend over a long period of time.

(See Fig. 38.) With increasing town government expenses, it is an accepted conclusion that the rate will go higher.

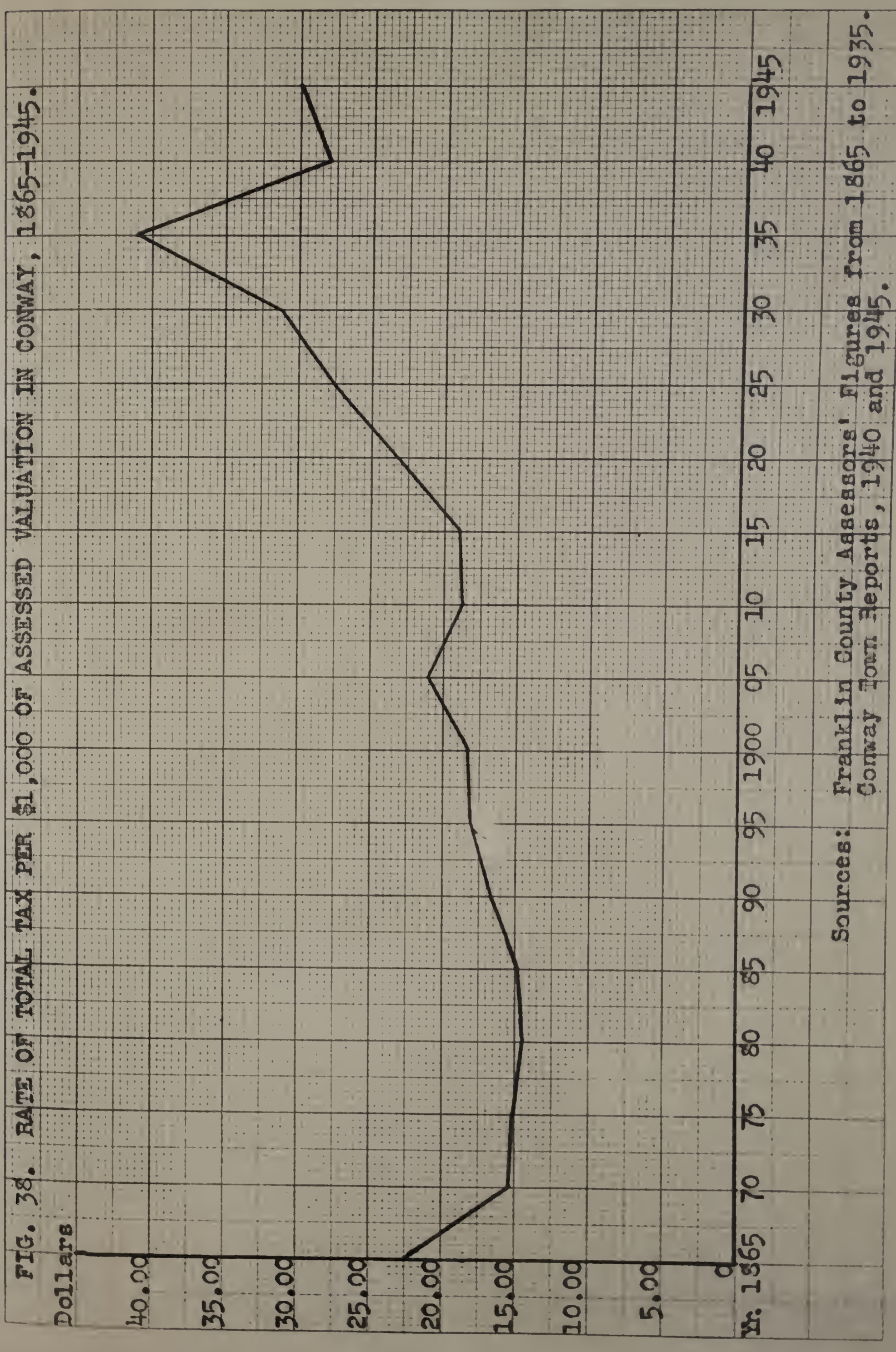
How the tax dollar is spent is portrayed on the sectored circle graph shown in Fig. 39. It is interesting to note that highways and schools account for 63.8 per cent of the dollar, which shows a progressive attitude on the part of the citizens.

In 1916, a field of about 5 acres, to the south of the Town Hall, was purchased for \$1,200. It was to be used for a playground and public park.<sup>1</sup> For many years, lack of interest failed to stimulate a definite yearly town appropriation for its maintenance and development. However, during the summers of 1938, 1939 and 1940, the town appropriated money for the improvement of the field and for trained supervisors. This was the only time that town funds supported a public recreation program. Since 1946 much more interest, partly brought about by the Conway Youth Center, has been shown. This is reflected by the increased annual appropriations for the maintenance of the field. A total of \$600.00 or \$120.00 per acre was appropriated for 1948. This is a healthy sign which means that Conway is taking a step forward in the develop-

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1. The History of Conway, p. 168.





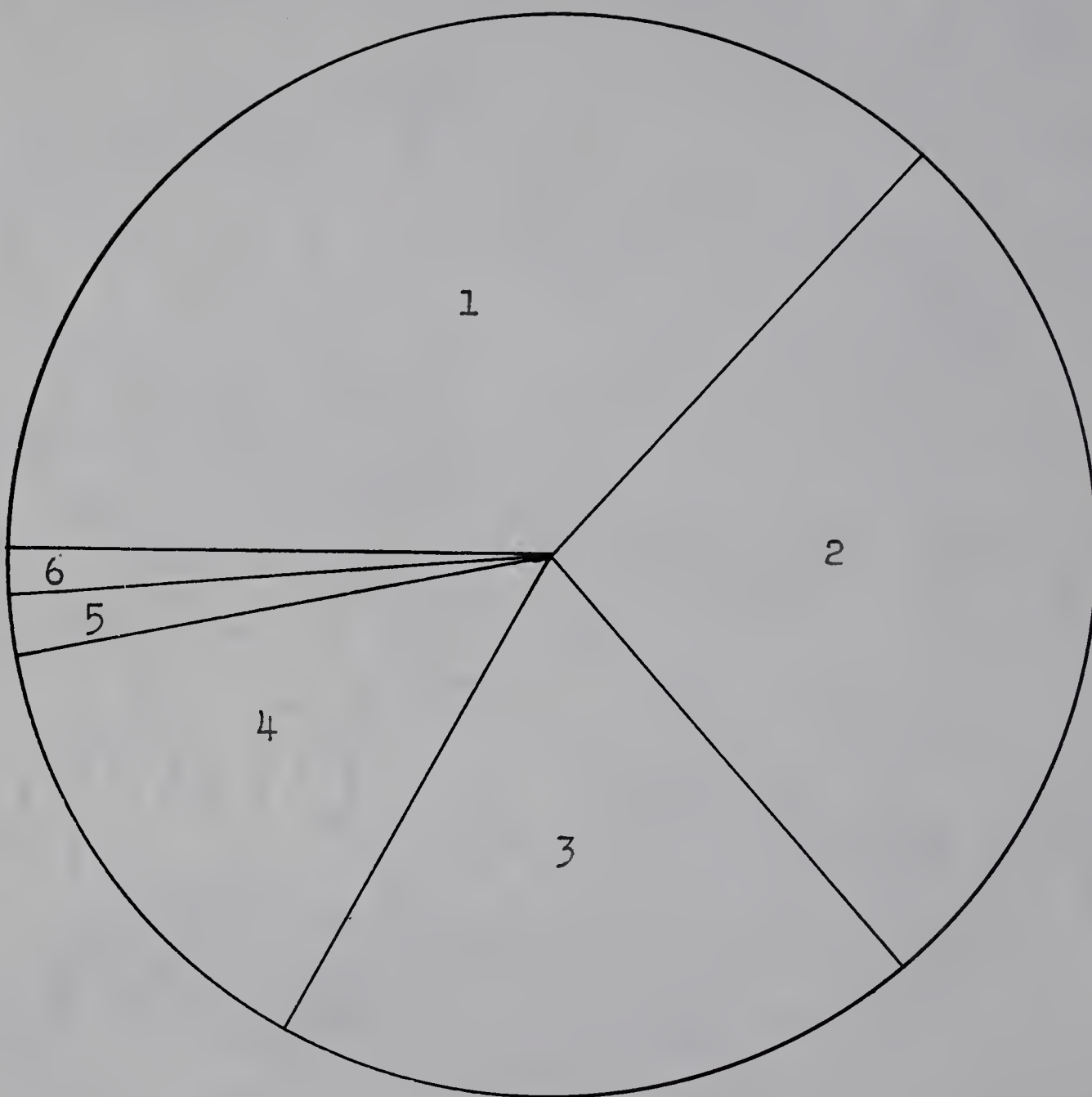


FIG. 39. HOW THE TAX DOLLAR IS SPENT IN CONWAY.

1947  
Expenditures

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
1. Highways	\$41,785.06	36.6
2. Schools	31,325.58	27.2
3. General Government	22,113.65	19.3
4. Charities	16,480.55	14.2
5. Protection	1,810.13	1.5
6. Other	1,463.29	1.2
	<u>\$114,987.26</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Source: Conway Town Report, 1947.  
Treasurer's Report, pp. 52-54.



ment of its recreational assets. A well kept playfield like Conway's, with such facilities as its baseball diamond, children's playground, tennis court, outdoor volley ball and basketball courts, and a picnic area is a fundamental asset which means better living in Conway. One of the finest investments that the people of Conway can make is to guarantee the perpetual maintenance of the playfield for the present and future generations.

It might also be added, as a matter of record, that the town annually appropriates \$50.00 for the observance of Armistice and Memorial Days.

CHAPTER VII.  
THE CONWAY YOUTH CENTER.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CONWAY YOUTH CENTER.

#### Introduction.

So far we have considered the natural endowment of Conway - its hills, streams, and forests. Generations have grown up in these hills and enjoyed nature's gifts - deeply and understandingly. Conway is a good place to live.

That doesn't mean everything is as it should be. We have seen how the hills, streams, forests, soil, and wild life have not been treated the way they should, and no one knows this better than the leading citizens of Conway. We have considered what it means to have a declining population, and to send youth to neighboring high schools. What kind of a town do commuters to Greenfield and South Deerfield want? What kind of homes do they demand? In what sort of neighborhood will their children play?

In 1945, some public spirited citizens decided to map the future. They decided that the control of the growth and development of their town must be more business-like. They arrived at the conclusion that the most urgent need was to plan ahead for the kind of a place in which they really wanted their children to live and play. The

Conway Youth Center was born.

The writer was fortunate to be employed as the director of the Center. Although given a full rein, it is important to note that the conception of the idea for growth and direction of the Youth Center program was in the hands of the various Youth Center committees rather than allowed to drift haphazardly - as before. The writer was director of the Center for 15 months. This part of the study will give an idea of what planning can do when a group of citizens and youth cooperate toward a common goal.

#### Origin.

A group of enthusiastic Conway citizens who represented the various districts and organizations of the town met on October 10, 1945 and formed the Conway Youth Recreation Committee. This meeting was the result of previous action on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald MacLeish, and Mr. MacLeish's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Campbell. These 2 families gave \$500, plus furniture, a victrola-radio and a motion picture projector to furnish a room in memory of the late Victor Germain, a leading young business man who was particularly interested in the youth of the community. The Youth Recreation Committee received permission from



the selectmen to use a large downstairs room (the old Grange Hall) in the Town Hall. This was the go-ahead signal and soon after the Conway Youth Center was formed and the constitution and by-laws were drawn up. November 10th to the 17th was Conway Youth Center Week which was set aside for the financial drive. The amazing sum of \$1,881.00 was raised as a result of the drive and other donations. This was in addition to the cash gift of the MacLeishs and Campbells. Besides the initial furnishings, other gifts included a Chickering grand piano given by Miss Vaile of South Ashfield, and a snackbar given by George Eldridge of Conway.

By January 1st, 1946, the program was under way.

#### Organization.

The Conway Youth Center official personnel include a president, vice-president, a secretary-treasurer and a board of 3 trustees. There are 5 standing committees which are: the Youth Center, Entertainment, Publicity, Athletics and Sports, and Finance. Each of these has a chairman and 4 members who assist in functions embracing their particular category. It is important to note that there is an Advisory Committee which is made up of 5 representatives elected by youth themselves. There are 2 Juniors (preteen) and 3 Seniors (teen age) who meet with

the officers and standing committees, at each monthly meeting. This enables closer cooperation between the youth and the adults in planning and exercising their program. To make the Youth Center more dependent on the youth and their expressed desires, the junior and senior councils have elected a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer as of October, 1947. This democratic method is proving most successful.

Many of the problems have been ironed out. However, the greatest problem which still faces the standing committees and the official personnel is that of replacing annually the present members upon the expiration of their term of office. People claim they are interested, but when it comes to service, they are not concerned enough to participate. It is true that many people in Conway do not feel that they have the ability to fulfill one of the many opportunities that arise to serve their youth. It is also surprising to find that in many cases, parents of Youth Center children show less interest than many other adults in town.

At present, great enthusiasm prevails among the youth who belong to the Youth Center, and it is to be hoped that their keen interest will spread by contagion to all the youth, parents, and adults within the town boundaries.



Fig. 40 is an Organization Chart of the Conway Youth Center.

A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Conway Youth Center explains the details of organization. (See next page.)

### Finance.

It is important to know who pays for the Youth Center and how the money is spent.

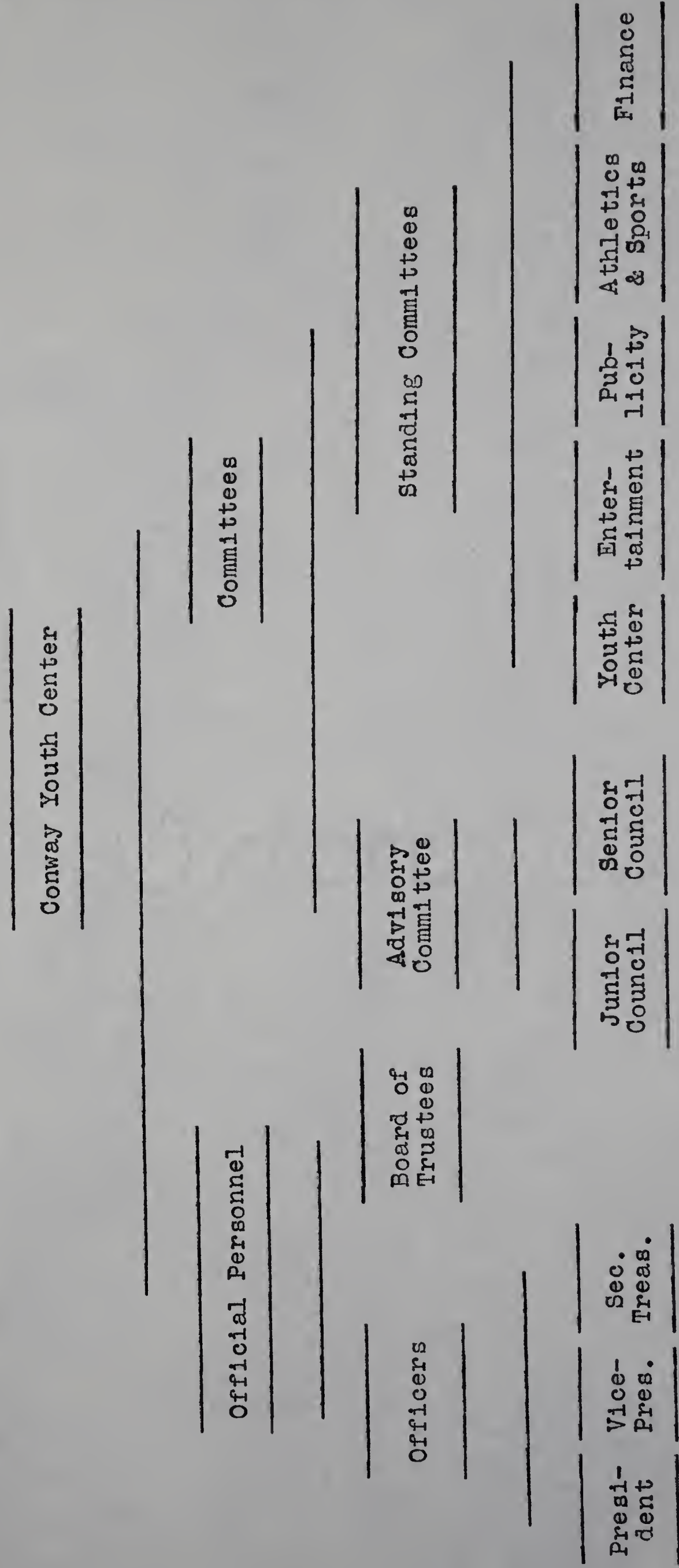
There have been 3 drives to raise money, each held in November. The first drive (November, 1945) was most successful. High enthusiasm, which is a characteristic of a new project, together with a well planned and managed campaign, resulted in a total of \$1,881.00 being raised.

In addition to this money raised by subscription, \$550.00 was given as a special gift to be used for furnishings and repair of the Center. A financial report for 1946 is shown on the next page.

The November, 1946 drive was conducted with less fervor. However, \$1414.30 was donated by 155 individual contributors as compared to 178 individual contributors in 1945 who gave \$1,881.00.

The financial report of the Youth Center for October, 1947 is shown in Table XII.

FIG. 40. ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE CONWAY YOUTH CENTER.





# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

## CONWAY YOUTH CENTER

### PREAMBLE

With the primary objective of developing specific activities in recreation which will serve the young people of our town, we do hereby form ourselves into the Conway Youth Center of Conway, Mass., and pledge our full cooperation and efforts for its success.

It shall be the purpose of this organization to provide wholesome entertainment and recreational activities for the youth of this community.

We further agree that this organization shall be strictly non-sectarian, non-partisan, and non-political.

### ARTICLE 1

#### Name

The Conway Youth Center shall be the name of this organization.

### ARTICLE 2

#### Membership

##### Section 1

All eligible boys and girls of the community may become Active Members of this organization.

##### Section 2

All adults of the community, who are in sympathy with the objectives of this organization, are eligible to become Sponsor Members by contributing of their energy and resources so that this organization may be a vital force for good in this community.

### ARTICLE 3

#### Officers

A president, a vice-president, and a secretary and treasurer shall constitute the official personnel of this organization and their term of office shall be for one year.

### ARTICLE 4

#### Trustees

There shall be three Trustees who shall be in charge of all trust funds and property held by the organization.

### ARTICLE 5

#### Board of Directors

There shall be vested in a Board of Directors the authority to govern this organization in all matters relating to the objectives for which it has been formed.

## ARTICLE 6

### Meetings

#### Section 1

The annual meeting of the organization shall be held on the First Monday in October of each year.

#### Section 2

Upon written request signed by at least 20 members (either Active or Sponsor members), or whenever deemed desirable by the Board of Directors, a Special Meeting shall be called.

## ARTICLE 7

An Amendment of this Constitution may be made at any regular or special meeting of the organization if carried by a 3/4 vote of those present at the meeting, with the provision that a quorum must be in attendance and voting at such meeting.

### BY-LAWS

#### Membership

##### Section 1

Active Membership in the organization is available to all youths while residing in Conway. Membership dues shall be not more than \$.50 per year.

##### Section 2

Sponsor Membership shall be confined to those adults who make contributions to the organization in cash, service, or both.

#### Officers

##### Section 3

The President shall be a member ex-officio of all committees.

##### Section 4

The Vice-President will preside in the absence of the President.

##### Section 5

The Secretary and Treasurer shall keep records of all meetings, communications, and will handle all funds, except those held in trust, and will make disbursements as approved by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be bonded for the amount of \$1000.00

#### Trustees

##### Section 6

The original Trustees shall be elected, one for a three year term, one for a two year term, and one for a one year term. Thereafter, one Trustee shall be elected each year for a three year term.

##### Section 7

They shall have charge of the property held by the organization and have charge of the investment and expenditure of any funds held in trust by the organization.



## Board of Directors

### Section 8

The officers, namely the President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be members of the Board of Directors. They shall be elected by ballot at the Annual Meeting of the organization. In addition to these officers, the Chairman of all Standing Committees shall be members of the Board of Directors.

### Section 9

The Board of Directors shall formulate and adopt rules for the conducting of business, fill vacancies on the Board of Directors and Trustees and be responsible for the management and control of the organization. A complete report of all activities and decisions of the Board of Directors shall be submitted by the Secretary at the Annual Meeting of the organization.

### Section 10

The Board of Directors meetings shall be held on the first Monday of each month, or as arranged at the next prior meeting.

## Elections

### Section 11

The Board of Directors shall select a nominating committee of three who will present a slate at the Annual Meetings of all proposed officers for the incoming year. Ballots will be for those nominated by the committee, or by nomination from the floor. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for the respective office shall be declared elected. The presiding officer will appoint a committee of three tellers to conduct the election. Proper notice of the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings shall be forwarded to all members of the organization at least seven days prior to the day it is held.

### Section 12

The President of the organization shall appoint all Standing Committees.

### Section 13

At least twelve of the members shall be present at the Annual and Special Meetings of the organization where official business is transacted.

## Standing Rules

- A. Rules for the Active Membership in the organization are to be made by the Committee and Supervisor in charge of the Youth Center.
- B. An Advisory Committee of at least four Active members shall be elected annually by the Active membership. This Committee will advise and work with all officers and Standing Committees of the organization.
- C. One or more Active members of the organization shall be appointed on each Standing Committee.
- D. All resolutions presented at the Annual or at Special meetings of the organization shall be in writing.
- E. In order to develop a larger interest in the Conway Youth Center by all the members of the organization, it is recommended that officers should not be re-elected when their terms expire.



# CONWAY HAS A YOUTH CENTER !!

November 8, 1946

A year ago we dreamed of a Youth Center in this community. Now it is a reality and the boys and girls of Conway believe in it and want it to continue. Every citizen has observed its work and felt its influence during the past year.

The officers and committees of the organization have worked diligently and greatly appreciate the generous and whole-hearted support of all our townspeople.

In our printed program last year we set forth the following **four objectives**:

1. A Youth Center Room properly furnished and equipped.
2. A capable paid Supervisor.
3. Entertainment programs.
4. Supervised playground activities and possibly swimming instruction.

All these objectives were carried out in full. It is estimated that in excess of 75% of the youth have participated. From June 6 to September 2 more than 2,000 boys and girls took part in craft work, nature study, hikes, picnics, dances, and playground games.

You are entitled to know how the money contributed has been spent for the year ending October 1, 1946.

**Total receipts were as follows:**

Gifts to be used for furnishings and repair of the Center	/	/	/	/	\$ 550.00
Receipts from Drive and other donations	/	/	/	/	1,881.00
Revenue from activities of Youth Center	/	/	/	/	112.17
Total					\$2,543.17

**Expenditures:**

Furnishings, equipping and decorating Youth Center	/	/	/	/	\$ 540.06*
Paid to Supervisors	/	/	/	/	620.20
Supplies, postage, stationery, printing	/	/	/	/	45.47
Playground, sports, athletic equipment, and supplies	/	/	/	/	496.28*
Entertainments	/	/	/	/	354.52
Miscellaneous	/	/	/	/	43.78
Total					\$2,195.85
Balance on hand Oct. 1					347.32
					\$2,543.17

\* These two items were taken care of for the most part by special gifts to be used for the purpose specified.

Most of the equipment and furnishings of the Youth Center including settees, tables, chairs, radio, projector machine, and grand piano were donated.

**Plans for the current year are as follows:**

1. To continue the **four major objectives**.
2. To also include supervised skiing, skating, and tobogganing.  
It is hoped that sufficient funds may be obtained to provide additional playground equipment and a program for the younger children of the town.

It is most essential that we continue to employ a first-class supervisor for the Youth Center work. We are very fortunate in having a good Supervisor and hope to continue his services.

The week of November 9-16 will be **CONWAY YOUTH CENTER WEEK**.

To carry on an adequate program requires that we obtain a minimum of \$2,000 for the coming year. Starting Saturday, November 9, solicitors will begin to make calls. We ask that you give according to your ability.

You are urged to make your subscription at once so that we may early achieve our goal.

Arrangements have been made whereby subscriptions can be paid quarterly during the year if so desired. A post card notice will be sent out by the Secretary on dates when such quarterly subscriptions are due.

We need help and advice from all contributing members. Adults are urged to not only give of their resources, but also of their time and suggestions to the end that we may pool our efforts in this inspiring work.

Give because you believe in it! Give because you want to feel the glow of satisfaction that comes to all of us when we know we are doing something to help our young people.

**Do your part and success will be assured!**

J. R. LINEHAN  
CHAIRMAN, FINANCE COMMITTEE



TABLE XII.

CONWAY YOUTH CENTER FINANCIAL REPORT, OCTOBER, 1947.

Income		Expenditures	
Balance	\$347.32	Administration	\$1207.92
Interest	8.19	Supplies for Youth Center Room	32.42
Contributions	1414.30	Athletics	294.44
Dues	16.25	Entertainment	70.89
Earned by Children	100.72		

Approximately 75 per cent of the expenditures in 1947 was for supervision. There was a total of 3 supervisors during the year. Equipment such as baseball and basketball uniforms accounted for much of the athletic expense incurred.

A breakdown of the third financial drive shows a pronounced decrease in the number of contributors. The facts are shown in Table XIII.

It is significant to note that of the 79 individual contributions in 1947, only 18 came from families with children of Youth Center age. Of the 155 individual contributions in 1946, 35 came from families with children of Youth Center age. In other words, one-half the number of people that contributed in 1946 contributed in 1947.

TABLE XIII.

## FINANCIAL REPORT, JANUARY, 1948.

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Cash received to date	\$610.00
Pledges payable after February 1 to August 1	<u>182.00</u>
Total cash and pledges to date	\$792.00

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Amount paid or pledged

Number of Individual Contributions	<u>\$.01-1.99</u>	<u>\$2.00-9.99</u>	<u>\$10.00-19.99</u>	<u>\$20.00-100.</u>
18	\$18.50			
36		\$124.00		
18			\$199.50	
9				\$450.00
Average contribution (See note)	\$1.03 (1)	\$3.45 (2)	\$11.08 (3)	\$64.28 (4)

Note (1) Of the 18 small contributions of less than \$2.00, only 3 (or 16%) came from families with children of Youth Center age, and totaled \$3.00.

Note (2) 10 (26.6%) families with children of Youth Center age contributed \$33.00 of the \$124.00 in this category.

Note (3) 5 families with children of Youth Center age contributed \$55.00 of the \$199.50, or 27.6% of the support. Average contribution from 18 families with children \$5.05, or less than 10 cents per week.

Note (4) No families with children of Youth Center age are represented in the category.

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Only two organizations (Sportsmen and Firemen) contributed to the drive. They gave a total of \$20.00, or 19.4 cents a week.

Why did this decrease in contributions occur?

It certainly was not because of the lack of interest among the youth. The present youth membership at the Youth Center is larger than in October 1947.

The author feels that there were several contributing factors. One is that there is less money available because of the increase in the cost of living, together with the prevailing idea, which exists in the minds of some people, that an economic depression is to come soon. A second reason is that many people feel that the youth should do more to raise money. It is true, that when the Youth Center began, too large a "silver platter" was handed to the young people. This mistake has been recognized, and at present all the youth and the Standing Committees are working together to raise money by youth sponsored projects.

A third reason is that some outlying districts as Broomshire, Shirkshire, and Poland are not represented. Transportation in the case of these districts has been a problem since the Youth Center commenced. Steps should be taken, perhaps by car pools, to provide an opportunity

for youth of these districts to come to Youth Center meetings.

The need for the Youth Center is just as great as ever. It is now necessary to sell the public on the Youth Center movement. The youth, wherever possible, should plan to bring the adults into their programs. That is to say, everyone in town must feel the Center is theirs. It has to "belong" or be a vital part of the community. The eventual goal should be a Community Center which brings in all ages.

It should be stated that it is most important from the beginning to obtain many small contributions rather than a few larger ones. Public education is a basic step in any community project. Like the support of the public schools, it is dependent on the public being completely informed at all times.

#### Facilities and Equipment.

The members of the Youth Center are fortunate in that they have excellent facilities and equipment. Under supervision, youth may use the upstairs auditorium and gymnasium in the Town Hall. Youth Center facilities and equipment are shown in Table XIV.



TABLE XIV.

YOUTH CENTER EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES.

The Youth Center Room

Snack bar  
Juke-box  
Grand piano  
Book case  
Radio and victrola combination  
Automatic record changer and amplifying system  
Ping-pong table and equipment  
Work-tools  
Work-bench  
Craft-materials, including  
    Plexiglass  
    Leather  
    Metal  
    Wood  
    Grimp  
Magazines

The Upstairs Auditorium

Gymnasium  
Small stage

Town Hall Basement

Shower room

The Town Playfield

Baseball diamond  
Tennis court  
Volley ball - basketball court  
Children's playground  
    Seesaws (3)  
    Swings (2)  
    Sand-box  
    Small slide  
    Horizontal bar

Swimming at Ashfield Lake, Ashfield

Diving board  
Raft  
Shallow area for beginners  
Excellent beach

The School Bus Available for Transportation

The Program.

What are the aims of a youth recreation program in a small community such as Conway? The Youth Center offers the youth from all sections of town an opportunity to work and play together in their own club room. This is the place for extra-curricular activities which are missed in high school because of school bus schedules. The Youth Center aims to teach youngsters the meaning of play and how to play. Another aim has been to introduce new fields of interest. Because there existed a need for trained leaders among the youth, leadership training by out of town recreation leaders was carried on for 2 years. Since January 1948 the youth have conducted their own program.

Between January 1946 and January 1948, 5 trained leaders from the University of Massachusetts worked with the young people. On occasion, outside recreation specialists were invited in to stimulate the program.

With the exception of the summer time, there are 2 regular meetings of the Youth Center each week. The Senior Council usually meets on Tuesday nights, and the Junior Council on Saturday morning. During July and August of 1946 and 1947, a 5 day a week program was conducted. The Center was open each week-day afternoon, and 3 evenings a week. The evenings were reserved for



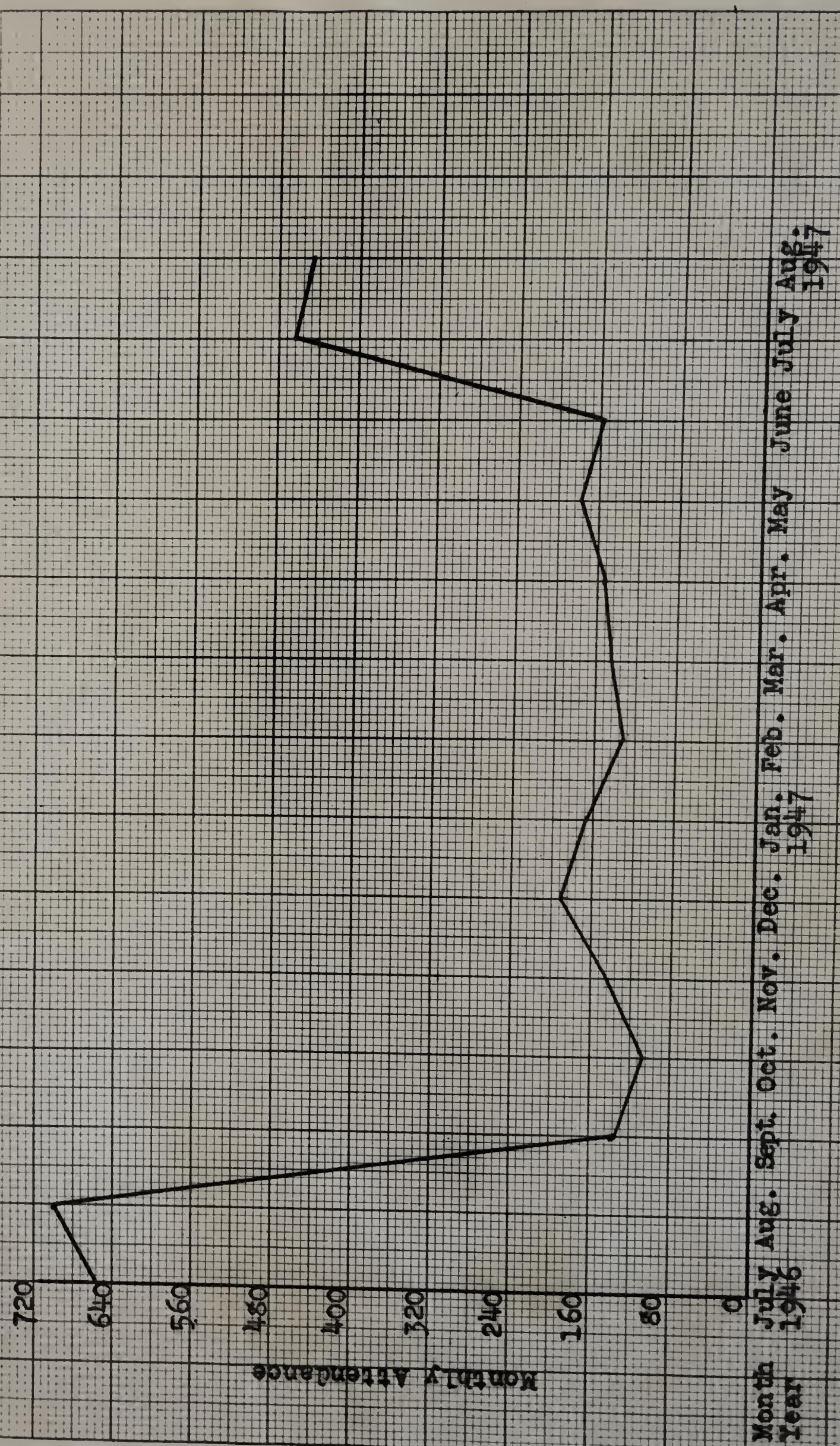
Senior Council members only. The total monthly attendance at Youth Center meetings from July 1946 to August 1947 is shown in Fig. 41.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the details of the program or how any one phase may contribute to good character, poise, self-assurance, and other desirable traits. However, each instructor was keenly interested in developing such traits at all times.

Sporting and athletic events, which were very popular, were performed on the playfield, (see Figs. 42 and 43), in the spring and summer and in the Town Hall Auditorium during the fall and winter. The Sports and Athletic Committee was greatly responsible for conducting baseball and basketball games. Uniforms were supplied for the respective teams. Both teams have played Athletic Clubs from surrounding towns. Additional equipment was bought with money they have earned. However, more importance was stressed towards having all the boys and girls participate in the various sports activities, than building a team around a few good players. Volley ball and tennis were popular during the summer on the outdoor courts. Softball was commonly played by the girls. Swimming parties to Ashfield Lake were conducted twice a week. One trip was in the afternoon for the younger boys



FIG. 41. CONWAY YOUTH CENTER, TOTAL MONTHLY ATTENDANCE FROM JULY 1946 THROUGH AUGUST 1947.





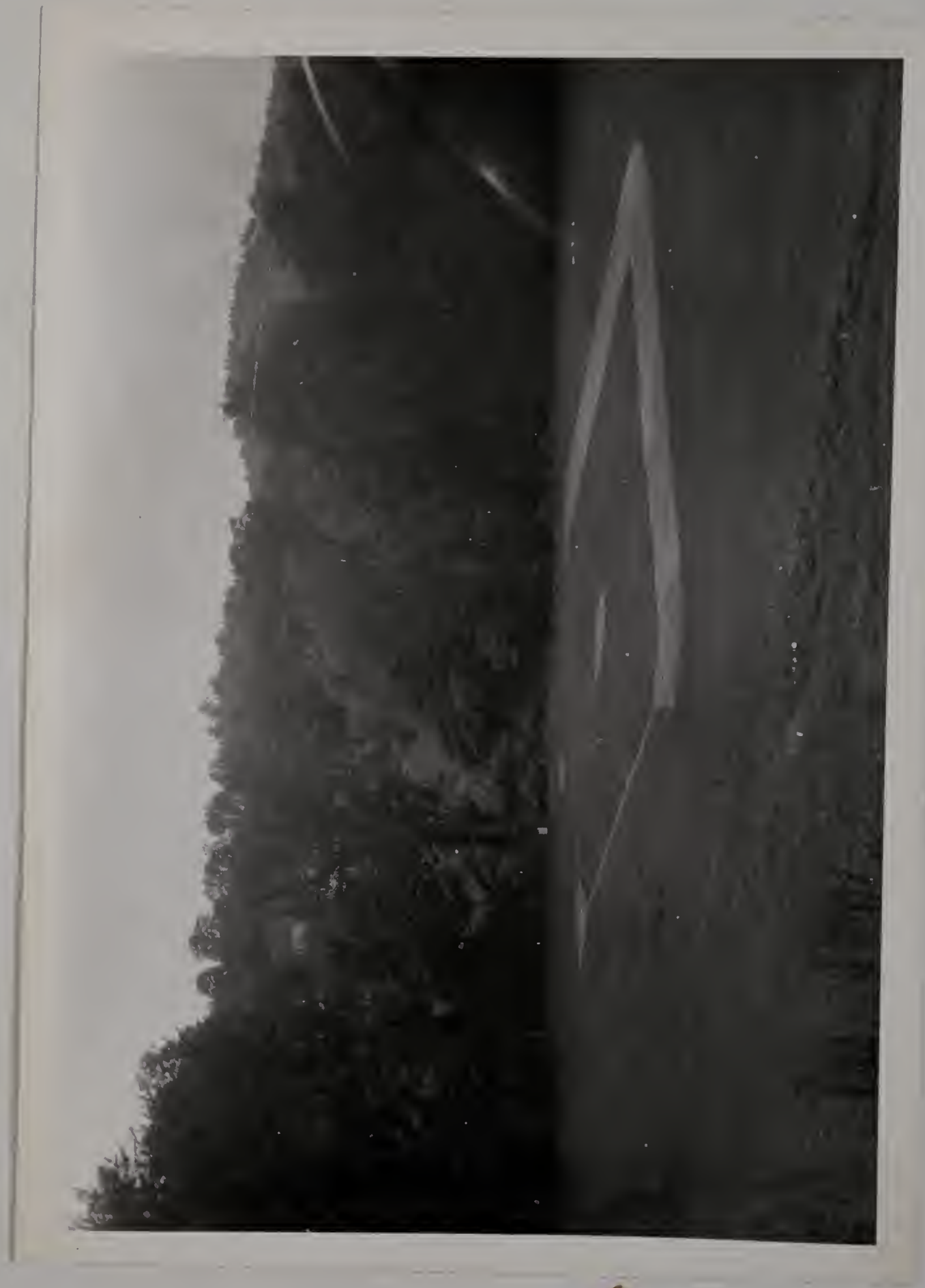


FIG. 42. THE BASEBALL DIAMOND ON THE TOWN PLAYFIELD.



FIG. 43. TENNIS COURT AND VOLLEY BALL COURT.



and girls, and another was held in the evening for the teen-agers. (See Fig. 44.) A school bus was used for transportation (see Fig. 45). The winter program featured winter sports, and instruction in skiing was given. An excellent toboggan run that ran onto the playfield was constructed. (See Fig. 46.) Some of the Junior Council, who received the winter sports program with enthusiasm, are shown in Figs. 47 and 48. Ping-pong has always been popular (see Fig. 49). Because of the interest shown in archery and badminton, the Center recently purchased equipment for both of these sports. There have been other sporting activities, but the foregoing have high-lighted the program.

No opportunity existed for crafts and arts until the Youth Center included them in their program. Gimp, leather, plastics, wood, and metal was available. Fly-tieing was introduced by an interested adult volunteer. By including craft work, there was opportunity to express creative abilities and to make objects of usefulness and beauty. Many comic books that appeared in the Center were used this way. Each boy and girl chose their favorite comic character. The most popular ones were selected, drawn, enlarged, and used to decorate the room. Mickey Mouse, who was handsomely colored, was over 6 feet



FIG. 44. ASHFIELD LAKE, ASHFIELD.  
YOUTH CENTER CHILDREN APPRECIATED THIS EXCELLENT BEACH.





FIG. 45. RAIN THREATENS A SWIMMING EXCURSION.



FIG. 46. THE TOBOGGAN RUN ONTO THE PLAYFIELD.





FIG. 47. WAITING FOR THE NEXT TOBOGGAN RIDE.



FIG. 48. TOBOGGANS, SKIS, JUMPERS, SLEDS, AND A  
HEALTHY GROUP OF YOUNGSTERS GUARANTEES A  
SUCCESSFUL DAY. (INSTRUCTOR HAROLD  
WHITE IS SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND.)





FIG. 49. EVERYONE ENJOYS PING-PONG.

tall. This is one example of how art can be made popular.

Musical talent has been presented on the stage in a number of different shows. The Junior Council is at present rehearsing a minstrel show. This was the first attempt in this direction by the pre-teen age group. For the past 2 years, the Entertainment Committee has given close co-operation in developing such programs.

Conway is an excellent out-of-door laboratory for nature study. Various phases in this field have been taught the year around. Nature study teaches keen observation and a respect for growing things. (See Figs. 50 and 51.) A Nature Trail which was especially popular, was constructed by children on Field Hill. Many hikes during both summer seasons were conducted along the trail. Bag-trotting, fishing hikes, cave exploring, porcupine hunts, and bee-lining proved most popular. Many collections of insects, minerals, and plants were the prize possessions of some Youth Center members. Cages were made by the boys who placed interesting live specimens in them. A nature exhibition was well received by the public. (See Fig. 52.) One July day in 1947, the Massachusetts Conservation Council Nature Van (manned by Bill Randall and Jim Baird, University of Massachusetts students) spent a full day at the Youth Center. (See





FIG. 50. CONWAY YOUTH ARE TAUGHT TO OBSERVE AND NOT PICK  
RARE WILD FLOWERS. (PURPLE FRINGED ORCHIS.)



FIG. 51. A STUDY OF NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE. (THIS FLEDGLING WAS RETURNED TO A LOWER BRANCH OF A TREE FOR SAFETY AND PARENTAL CARE.)





FIG. 52. NATURE STUDY EXHIBITION.

Fig. 53.) More than 50 youngsters enjoyed the many unusual exhibits that were made available. Colored slides of wildlife were shown in the Youth Center room. A nature hike was also conducted.

Among the social activities there have been Hallowe'en, Christmas, Valentine, and St. Patrick programs, various social games, scavenger hunts, movies, special suppers, and candy sales. Dancing has improved. (See Fig. 54.) The majority are no longer inclined to simply watch from the side line. Some Youth are excellent square dancers.

To meet the needs of the pre-school age children, an afternoon tot program was inaugurated at the playfield during the summer. A large number of mothers volunteered and 2 mothers were in charge each week-day afternoon. The slide, swings, seesaws, and sand box were big attractions. (See Figs. 55 and 56.)

To sum up, the program has been a successful experiment in rural recreation. The youth have shown genuine interest. They are now busy working on various methods to sell their program to all the people of Conway. One way they are approaching this problem is through a bi-monthly news sheet entitled the "Youth Center Chatter". More public programs are being sponsored this year than





FIG. 53. THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATION VAN.  
"NATURE EDUCATION ON WHEELS".



FIG. 54. DANCING IS A POPULAR PAST-TIME IN THE YOUTH CENTER ROOM.





FIG. 55. ONE DOWN - TWO TO GO.



FIG. 56. YOUTH RECREATION CAN WELL START WITH A TOT PROGRAM.



ever before. Plans are now under way to have trained leaders this summer, and for each summer in the future. The Youth Center realizes that good planning and leadership is essential. It is hoped that the impetus of a bang-up summer program and summer leadership training for youth will build a strong foundation for the rest of the year-round program.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT FINDINGS.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT FINDINGS.

#### Natural History.

##### Location:

1. Conway is favorably located for commuters who work in the valley towns of Greenfield and South Deerfield.

##### Geology:

1. Geologically, the Conway Schist is an interesting formation in which to study rock and mineral formations. Conway schist is of no known commercial importance.

##### Topography:

1. The topography of Conway is responsible for scenic beauty which may be considered as Conway's most valuable asset. There is approximately a difference of 1325' in altitude between the lowest and highest areas.
2. Conway is highly adaptable to winter sports not only because of suitable topography, but also because of favorable climate and location in regard to population centers.
3. One of the best sites for a ski tow is south of Joe Herrick Gulf. A skier could drop 350' in the total run of one-half mile.
4. The panoramic view from Field Hill is particularly good to the northeast, east, southeast, and south.

Soil:

1. Of the 59.8 per cent of the land which is adaptable for agriculture, only 15.9 per cent has good suitability.
2. The best agricultural soil is found in the lower hills and valleys of the central and northern parts of the town.
3. The most scenic land for state forests, wayside picnic sites, bridle trails, and other forms of outdoor recreation is usually found in rugged areas where it is unsuitable for agriculture.

Cover and Land Use:

1. Approximately 55 per cent of the total land area was in woodland in 1945.
2. There has been a 31 per cent decrease in improved land between 1925 and 1945.
3. New forests of inferior species are encroaching and returning many pastures to their original forested state.
4. The watershed areas in the southern part of the town are recreational blackouts. This means there will be no future recreational development of these areas.

Water:

1. Only .2 per cent of the total land area is water, which is mostly in the form of streams. The northern



two-thirds of Conway belongs to the Deerfield River System. The remaining third drains into the Connecticut River.

2. Future fishing in Conway will be principally restricted to the accessible streams in the central and northern parts of the town.
3. The Deerfield River which flows along the northern boundary of Conway is the best trout stream in the state.
4. The small brooks which run into the north-flowing Bear and South Rivers would serve best as posted breeding streams.
5. The Mill River valley should be preserved at once because of its accessibility, rugged topography, forest cover, and good fishing. It is of high recreational value for roadside picnicking.
6. Natural ponds of any size are practically non-existent. There are several sites where former mill ponds could be restored for year round water sports.
7. Lake Wequanock is the only significant lake in Conway. Bass fishing is good here.
8. The land south of Lake Wequanock to Mathews and Hoosac Roads is largely run down pasture and brush land, submarginal in character.

Climate:

1. Winters average 2° colder and summers 2° to 4° than the eastern and southeastern part of Massachusetts.
2. The average growing season is about 150 days.
3. Summers are sufficiently warm for good yields of tobacco and corn.
4. Rainfall throughout the year is fairly even. It averages between 40" and 50".
5. Flash floods constitute a serious threat to exposed top soil.
6. Conway can expect on the average more than 50" of snow each winter. There is adequate snow for at least a 9 week winter sports season.

Social History.

Population:

1. Conway, having a density of 22.9 inhabitants per square mile, is one of the most sparsely settled in the state.
2. Changes in total population in Conway from 1910 to 1935 shows that it has decreased more than in any surrounding town.
3. From 1930 to 1947, deaths exceeded births by 11 per cent. The number of young people is declining.
4. In 1940, there were 448 farm dwellers and 496 non-farm dwellers. Therefore the farm population is now



in minority.

5. The population may be stabilized in the near future by commuters.

Nativity:

1. Of the immigrants who came to Conway, the Irish, French Canadians, and Polish came in greatest numbers.
2. In 1940, only 7 per cent of the total population were foreign born. There is no pronounced racial problem in Conway.

Age Groups:

1. The largest single age group (1940) was the 15 to 24 year old age group which represented 17 per cent of the population.
2. Age group 65 years and older was increasing in 1940.
3. Because age groups embracing people 25 to 44 years have decreased, a decrease in younger age groups may be expected. This has been borne out already in the school census.

Occupations:

1. 47 per cent of the people depended upon agriculture for their livelihood in 1940.
2. Twenty people are presently employed by a local manufacturing company. Approximately 50 other people are employed by manufacturing companies outside of Conway.

3. The bank, garages, saw mills, homes, local stores, and public service occupations account for the largest percentage of local non-agricultural employees.
4. Conway is well suited for the establishment of small folk art and wood working industries.

#### Housing:

1. Few new dwelling houses have been constructed over a period of many years.
2. In 1940, the standard of living was not all to be desired. Of the farm dwellings, 50 per cent had no private bath, 12 per cent had no running water in the unit, 32 per cent had no indoor toilet, and 20 per cent had no electric lighting.
3. Conway has no planning or zoning board.

#### Public Health:

1. In 1945, 51 per cent of the school children showed no evidence of having dental defects corrected in 1 year's time.
2. Serious stream pollution occurs along the South and Mill Rivers, and along the lower part of Pumpkin Hollow Brook.
3. There is no public swimming pool in Conway.
4. Some 50 people swim at several places in the highly contaminated South River, and a smaller number in the Mill River on a hot summer's day.



Social, Educational and Recreational Interests:

1. Insofar as athletic interest is concerned, Conway is mainly limited to baseball and basketball.
2. Revitalized community thinking and planning is reflected in such organizations as the Conway Youth Center, the Barber Shop Quartet, and a strong 4-H Club.
3. The development of a small art colony and the establishment of Roaring Brook Camp also serve to demonstrate other possibilities within the town limits.
4. The 1947 hobby show revealed much talent that could be incorporated in the development of a well-rounded community center program.
5. There is considerable interest in parties, athletics, hikes, music, and art. There is an apparent need for an organized coordinated program. Such a program can be made possible through a community center.
6. Leadership is difficult to obtain. Of the 30 families questioned, only 13 per cent signified interest in leadership. Probably a much smaller per cent would actually participate.

Economic Activities.

Manufacturing Industry:

1. Manufacturing industry is limited to one small tap and die factory. A more appropriate manufacturing

would be a small wood-using industry.

Agriculture:

1. Complete farm ownership by most occupants shows a definite trend toward agricultural stabilization in Conway.
2. Among the principal crops grown in 1925, 1935 and 1945, apples and potatoes have declined sharply. Tobacco shows a definite trend upward since reaching its low point in 1935. Corn and hay remained stable.
3. Flocks of sheep no longer exist. Although the cow population slumped in 1945, it came back quickly in 1946 and 1947. Poultry raising has increased sharply.

Forests:

1. Forest areas are increasing. Over 50 per cent of the land is now covered by forest.
2. Forest management is practically unknown in Conway. Not until the farmers introduce forest management to their wood lands can they expect a sustained economic yield.
3. A managed and enlarged town forest would make an excellent investment for all the people of Conway. It would offer greater economic stability by the reduction of taxes through the sale of forest products, by some local employment in the forest, and by guaranteeing future local wood industries a continuous supply of quality lumber.
4. The abandoned upland to the north of the present un-



managed town forest is submarginal and should be used for forestry and recreation.

5. Conway is a favorable place for nature education because elements of the Canadian Transitional and Upper Austral life zones are found in the forests.

#### Commercial Recreation:

1. Conway has a rich and colorful background which may serve as an incentive for the tourist and traveler to stop in Conway.
2. There are at present no facilities for overnight tourists such as hotels, cabins, and tourist homes.

#### Social Facilities.

#### Schools:

1. There has existed a lack of unity among youth (12-18 years) for many years because of the distribution of high school students. One aim of the Conway Youth Center is to unify youth by bringing them together, and to offer a program that will allow for activities that the students miss in their respective schools.
2. There exists a great scarcity of recreational facilities and equipment at the Burkeville Grammar School. There is nothing adequate to supplant the school yard during the winter.
3. The elementary school registration has decreased from

163 in 1930 to 107 in 1947.

4. Only 42 per cent of the grammar school graduates complete their high school course.
5. In recent years, less than 5 per cent of the high school students went on to a 4-year college. None returned to Conway, because their home town had nothing to offer them.

#### Libraries:

1. There is a lack of interest in the library, especially by the younger members of the town. There are empty basement rooms that could be used in conjunction with an active program.

#### Transportation and Roads:

1. The decided increase in traffic flow during the summer and fall, is a result of pleasure drivers.
2. There are 20 miles of abandoned roads that can serve for hiking, horse back riding, and winter sports.  
There are also 71 miles of maintained road.

#### Community Organizations and Meeting Places:

1. There are a number of organizations that serve the community. The greatest problem which is confronting some of these organizations is how to regain genuine interest and leadership, and how to coordinate these efforts.



2. Such important community organizations as the Youth Hostel, the Boy and Girl Scouts, and the Grange have slipped silently away.

Town Finance:

1. Since 1930, the value of land has been decreasing. This is due to changes in land use together with the depletion of merchantable timber stands. The total valuation of personal property and buildings has shown a steady upward trend since 1895.
2. Schools and roads account for the largest percentage of the tax dollar.
3. The town appropriated \$600.00 for the upkeep of the playfield in 1948. This is a healthy sign in that it represents the largest single appropriation for the field's maintenance. A well kept playfield with good facilities means better living in Conway.

The Conway Youth Center.

1. The Conway Youth Center is an example of what planning and cooperation can do for a particular group within the community.
2. The greatest problem confronting the Youth Center personnel is to find adults who have sufficient interest and ability to serve as leaders.

3. Parents of Youth Center children often show less interest than other adults.
4. At present, great enthusiasm prevails among the youth who participate in the Youth Center.
5. The last financial drive shows a pronounced decrease in the number of contributors. This decrease was due to less available money, failure of the Youth Center to supply organized transportation to outlying districts, and a feeling among adults that Conway youth should do more to raise money for their organization.
6. In theory the Conway Youth Center is a vital part of the community. However, in practice, many adults do not feel that it is sufficient because all ages are not dealt with. There is need for a community center which will include a program for people of all ages.
7. Youth Center aims include:
  - a. To offer the youth of the community a place where they can work and play together.
  - b. To offer extra-curricular activities which are missed in high school.
  - c. To teach the meaning of play and how to play.
  - d. Leadership training for youth.
  - e. To offer new fields of interest and experience.



8. The Conway Youth Center program has been broad and flexible. It has provided opportunities to participate in sports and athletics, music, dramatics, arts and crafts, nature, and social recreation such as hobbies and dancing.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSIONS.



## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCLUSIONS.

#### Long Range Recreation Program for Conway.

The people of Conway who have planned, worked, and coordinated their efforts to bring about the Conway Youth Center have done an admirable job. The Youth Center has provided needed recreation in many fields for the youth of the community. There remains to be formulated a broader recreation program which will satisfactorily meet the needs of all members of the community.

It is of extreme importance for the people of Conway to appreciate the significance of the development of recreational projects which will bring additional income or more fully develop the economic stability of the community.

The purpose of the following recommendations is twofold: First of all they are offered as a means to improve existing conditions and make for better, more well-rounded living in Conway. And second, they can serve as a basis for developing recreation as an industry in Conway. These recommendations fit under one of two categories, namely - municipal and commercial recreation. It is important to understand that the development of commercial or private-enterprise recreational projects frequently go

hand-in-hand with the development of a municipal recreation program.

### Recommendations.

#### Municipal Recreation.

Immediate needs (to be carried out by 1952).

1. That the Town of Conway establish a Community Recreation Council which would be representative of town government and community organizations.
2. That the Community Recreation Council employ a director for public community recreation service within the limits of funds available. The immediate aim should be to employ a director who is capable of good leadership for the summer months. It is not advisable for the Community Recreation Council to undertake or attempt a program without leadership. Great care should be taken in selecting the right man. Not only should he be a promoter, an organizer, and an executive, but he should be interested in all ages and in a variety of activities. He should be proficient in some activities that he will personally take charge of. An understanding of school aims and problems is important. His recreation experiences should be broad, and include considerably more than teaching



and coaching sports.

Estimated salary not less than \$40.00 per week for 8 weeks.

3. That the Town Hall and its facilities be used as the Community Center.
4. That an immediate budget of \$1.00 per capita be raised by taxation to support the community recreation program. The development of recreational areas should not proceed faster than the current budget can be raised to cover the cost of adequate operation.

Major capital costs should be financed through a bond issue over a period of years, supplemented by donations, subscriptions, and memorials.

5. That the town establish a Planning Board. The duties of this Board should include a study of municipal recreational resources and also to suggest programs of action.
6. That action be taken by the Board of Health to stop pollution along Pumpkin Hollow Brook.
7. That a swimming pool be built at the southwest corner of the playfield and that water from Pumpkin Hollow Brook be used for the pool. An adequate pool could be made by bull-dozing this area and constructing an earthen dam featuring a spillway and sluice. There is a continuous supply of fresh water. The pool

should be filled with water only during the summer. An adequate pool would be 30' wide and 90' long. The slope of the bottom should be gradual - not more than 1' in 15'. State laws require toilet, drinking water and bath house facilities. The area should be fenced in. Before such a pool is constructed, a competent engineer familiar with pool construction should be consulted. It is estimated that such a pool will cost \$2000.00.

8. That picnicking facilities such as tables, benches, and brick or cemented stone fire places be erected near Pumpkin Hollow Brook on the west side of the town playfield.

This could be a community project which would restrict costs to materials. \$25.00 would cover the cost of approximately all materials.

9. That a skating area be set aside in the southeast corner of the playfield. It will be necessary to employ a bull-dozer to prepare this area. Cost would be approximately \$100.00. Once this area is ready for use, the preparation of an ice surface for skating could be done with the aid of a fire-truck pumping water from the nearby brook.
10. It is recommended that the Town of Conway employ a part-time caretaker for the playfield. His specific



duties should include mowing the grass on the playfield, maintaining the courts and baseball diamond, repairing broken playfield equipment, keeping the swimming area clean, and necessary landscape work which will give a well groomed appearance to the field.

11. That steps be taken to establish a playground at the Burkeville Grammar School. It is recommended that an asphalt-covered basketball court be constructed on the southwest side of the school and that a set of 6 swings (frame 12' high), a slide, 8' high (approx. 16' long), a set of 3 or 4 seesaws, and a horizontal ladder be added as playground facilities.

Estimated cost \$600.00.

12. That options be secured on proposed recreational land areas as soon as possible, before such areas become unavailable or prohibitive in cost.
13. That immediate action be taken by the Town of Conway and neighboring towns who would benefit to have the State Department of Conservation preserve the Mill River Valley.

#### Commercial or Private Recreation.

Immediate needs.

1. It is recommended that the Planning Board or a Rural

Policy Committee study in detail the town's recreation resources under private auspices and suggest programs of action that would include publicity of historical and scenic assets, establishment of Folk-art industries, and tourist facilities.

2. That the Sportsman's Club commence a policy to improve trout fishing by posting smaller brooks which may then serve more effectively as breeder streams.
3. That the Board of Trustees of the Field Library consider the recreational possibilities of library basement rooms.

Needs to be Accomplished in the Next Ten Years.

1. That the Town of Conway adopt zoning.
2. That an operating budget of \$3.00 per capita be raised by taxation for supporting the community recreation program. This figure is based on the National Recreation Association Bulletin for December, 1947.
3. That the Board of Health take steps to end all stream pollution in Conway.
4. That the Town Forest be managed according to silvicultural methods and enlarged by securing additional parcels to the north and northeast of the present Town Forest. Average cost per purchased acre of



forest land is considered by the State Conservation Commission to be \$5.00 per acre.

5. That a winter sports center featuring a ski tow be developed south of Joe Herrick Gulf. It is estimated that the ski run would be one-half mile long and drop 400 feet. Few trees would have to be removed in the upper area. There are many small trees in the lower area and some large rocks that would have to be removed. The run should be at least 100' wide. A bull-dozer could efficiently clear and grade this area. It is estimated that \$500.00 would satisfactorily cover the cost of preparing the run. Two tows of approximately 1000' length are necessary. Old automobile engines from an auto junk yard can serve to pull the tow ropes. They cost about \$25.00 each. Poles to support the rope and auto rims can be cut in the nearby forest. Automobile tire rims that will be mounted on the poles for the rope to travel on can be purchased at an auto junk yard at a small expense. Four thousand feet of rope is necessary. Present figures reveal the cost approximately will be \$.80 a yard for 1" rope.

A reasonable charge to use the tow would be \$1.50 a day. The tow should pay for itself in a few

years and then serve as a source of income for the town.

6. That abandoned roads be kept clear of brush so that they can serve as fire lanes and for recreation such as hiking, hunting, horse back riding, and winter sports.
7. That the basement of the Town Hall be improved so that it might serve for a number of recreational purposes. Approximately 75 cubic yards of earth will have to be removed. A cement floor should be laid. Approximate cost will be \$500.00.

Long Range (to be carried out by 1968).

1. That Lake Wequanock and the land immediately surrounding it together with the submarginal land southward to the Mill River be acquired by the State for state forest and recreation purposes.
2. That consideration be given to future development of Field Hill.



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